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ABSTRACT

This report presents a study of the structures, reviews, and evaluations of preventative education measures (designed to prevent dropouts) in Dublin schools in order to make recommendations for developing models of best practice. An introduction presents study aims, objectives, and methodology. Section 1 provides an overview of the policy context of preventative education in Ireland. It addresses the issue of the high correlation between socioeconomic background and early school-leaving. Special emphasis is on integration of services. Section 2 describes types of preventative education measures being implemented in Dublin. They are divided into three groups--Department of Education and Science programs, other national programs, and locally based preventative education programs. It finds shared characteristics: their preventive nature and the extensive effort invested in prevention; and differences: their basic assumptions regarding causes of early school-leaving--personal, cultural, social, or economic. Section 3 identifies elements of a model of best practice for preventative education. Elements are categorized into human resources, material resources, internal organization, and external organization. The "Conclusion and Recommendations" section discusses two issues believed to require closer examination--integration and the capital context of early school-leaving--and makes recommendations for institutionalization of the model. Appendixes include a 129-item bibliography; list of preventative education measures included; education indicators 1998; and census data for Dublin partnership areas. (YLB)

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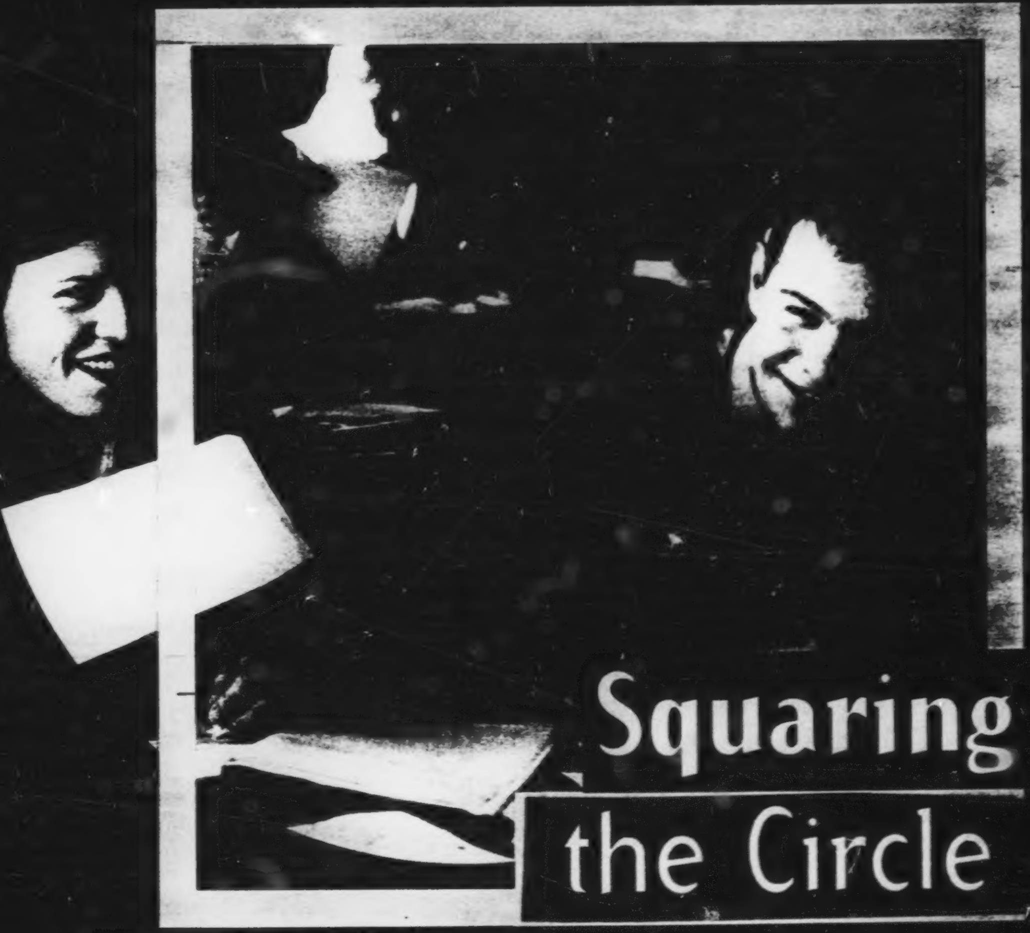

Squaring the Circle

an analysis of programmes in Dublin schools to prevent early school leaving

With recommendations for a model for best practice

by Ted Fleming and Mark Murphy

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SQUARING THE CIRCLE

An analysis of programmes in Dublin schools to prevent early school leaving.

With recommendations for
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by

Ted Fleming and Mark Murphy

National University of Ireland Maynooth

Dublin Employment Pact

Policy Paper No. 3

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THE DUBLIN EMPLOYMENT PACT represents a very broad range of interests across the Dublin Region. Its aim is to promote practical solutions and recommendations regarding unemployment (particularly long-term unemployment), future sustainable employment policy and the economic growth and development of the Dublin Region.

The Pact recognises the key role of educational disadvantage in the continuing problems of long-term unemployment, social exclusion and skills deficits in the labour force in Dublin. The Focus Group on Youth Employment and Education established by the Pact decided that there was a critical need for an in-depth examination of the wide range of interventions and pilot projects implemented in Dublin to tackle early school-leaving. Such a study needed to establish the nature, aims and achievements of these diverse interventions and establish clear and coherent parameters for future policy development in this area.

Disadvantaged communities in Dublin in particular have been affected by very high rates of early school-leaving, which is known to be a key adverse factor in the life chances of young people. Tackling this issue is now a major priority of government policy, which includes ambitious national targets for increased retention rates at school. A very large range of quality interventions have been developed and tried, both by the Department of Education and Science and also by youth organisations, schools, other statutory and voluntary agencies and Partnership companies at the local level. Many of these, however, have remained as local pilots, sometimes even in competition for funding. The very diversity, range and uneven spread of these interventions has possibly prevented a coherent overview of their individual and combined effect.

The Pact therefore commissioned Dr Ted Fleming and Dr Mark Murphy of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, to examine the nature and structure of the diverse preventative education projects in Dublin and to produce recommendations towards establishing models of best practice.

Based on a detailed examination of existing reports and evaluations, the study establishes that interventions tend to be based on one or more of a range of specific assumptions, viz. that the cause of early school leaving lies primarily with *either* the individual, the parents, the local community, the school *or* with society. The underlying assumption of a given intervention necessarily influences the intervention. Where the individual child is the focus, programmes will be aimed at enhancing social skills and developing self-esteem. Where the school is the focus, programmes will tend to concentrate on resources, training and syllabus, and where the family is the focus, programmes will concentrate on homework facilities, breakfast provision and parent support.

The researchers introduce the concept of the overall 'capital context' of early school-leaving, involving personal, social, cultural and economic factors. Each type of capital plays a role in deciding whether or not a child stays on at school. They stress that all of these capital elements must be included in any interventionist programme and to omit any one of them fragments and reduces the effectiveness of the response.

The researchers further suggest that, given the strong correlation between socio-economic background and early school leaving, policy must be directed as much towards inequalities in society as towards schools, districts, parents and pupils. In tackling educational disadvantage it is essential that a level playing field be established with access by all children to the key forms of capital.

In proposing a model of best practice applicable to all programmes of intervention, they categorise the main components of an integrated response. This must include both adequate human and material resources as well as close attention to how projects are organised internally and externally - i.e. including the involvement of parents, students and the community.

The study concludes with a range of recommendations regarding this model of best practice which, if implemented, will provide a sound basis for achieving a solution to the core issue of early school-leaving.

This is an excellent and challenging report and it warrants close examination and debate by all the major stakeholders.

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Ted Fleming

Mark Murphy

National University of Ireland Maynooth
May 2000

ABBREVIATIONS

ADM	Area Development Management
BTC	Breaking the Cycle
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CSO	Central Statistics Office
ESF	European Social Fund
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
JCSP	Junior Certificate School Programme
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPLURD	Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development
SIS	Stay in School

Introduction

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THIS study was commissioned by the Dublin Employment Pact in 1999 to examine the nature and function of current preventative education measures in Dublin. Over the last number of years early school-leaving has risen to the top of the social policy agenda in Ireland. Those familiar with the workings of schools, statutory agencies and community groups will have noticed the recent shift from provision for those who have left school early, to preventing students leaving school early. There is widespread recognition that such pro-active measures are essential in the efforts to reduce educational disadvantage and social exclusion. As ADM (1999a: 7) put it, there is an

> *increasing recognition of the need to counter educational disadvantage in Ireland, and to develop strategies and measures which will retain more young people within the formal education system for a longer period of time.*

Policy on educational disadvantage and social inclusion provides the context for the importance placed on early school-leaving. The most obvious manifestation of educational disadvantage "is the number of young people who leave school early and/or without any effective educational qualifications" (ADM, 1999a: 7).

There is certainly a great deal of impetus behind government proposals to deal with the issue. One of the objectives of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997) is to "eliminate the problem of early school-leaving before the Junior Certificate such that the percentage of those completing the senior cycle will increase to at least 90 per cent by the year 2000 and 98 per cent by the year 2007." This recommendation followed on from the White Paper on Education (1995), which included the objective of meeting retention rates of 90 per cent by the year 2000. Also, the National Economic and Social Forum (1997: 3) argues that early school-leaving, along with youth unemployment, are "among the most serious social and economic problems which this state must address."

The present study aims to add to this debate about early school-leaving by contributing to the knowledge of preventative education measures and models of best practice. It surveys the existing reviews of measures operated by a range of organisations – the Department of Education and Science, other statutory agencies, schools, youth organisations, community groups and area-based partnerships, to name some of the main players. It provides additional relevant knowledge to an already extensive literature on early school-leaving and educational disadvantage.

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THIS REPORT

The Youth Unemployment and Education Focus Group of the Dublin Employment Pact state that their mission is,

> *to harness the collective competencies of the various parties to the Dublin Employment Pact to tackle the related issues of early school-leaving and youth unemployment in the greater Dublin region on an effective, integrated basis.*

The Centre for Adult and Community Education at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth has joined with the Dublin Employment Pact in researching and writing this report.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Aim:

The aim of the study is to examine the nature and structures of preventative education measures in Dublin in order to make recommendations regarding models of best practice.

Objectives:

- To examine the policy context within which preventative measures have developed nationally.
- To outline the different preventative measures existing in Dublin, their objectives and their successes and failures as reviewed in the literature, reports and evaluations.
- To use the discussions of both policy and practice and make recommendations in relation to developing models of best practice in preventative education.

METHODOLOGY

The findings of this study are based on the available documentation produced by Dublin-based preventative education measures. Evaluations, interim reports, proposals, progress reports to funders, and other useful written material were gathered for the purpose of this review. In this regard organisations deemed likely to be involved in the provision of preventative education were contacted to establish whether they had developed specific measures and, if so, whether documentation in any form was available on them (See Appendix A for a list of organisations contacted). Youth organisations, Area-Based Partnerships, Government Departments and agencies, and other miscellaneous bodies were contacted in this regard. The model of best practice is based on the collation of the findings of these reports. (See Appendix B for the list of preventative education measures included in the study).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is based on the written work of practitioners and researchers. As a result, the main limitation of the present work is that it does not involve primary research. It consists of a documentary analysis of already existing material and relies on the information detailed in sundry reports. The problem with this approach is that no systematic approach to evaluations of preventative education measures exists. As a result, it is difficult to compare approaches in terms of their effectiveness. This is particularly the case when comparing local to national approaches.

Even within each sphere, identifying elements of best practice can be a vague exercise, given that many evaluations and reports are produced on an *ad-hoc* basis and are carried out at the request of funding agencies or other organisations. Also, many of the reviews and evaluations examine the merits of programmes on the basis of the mission statements of the organisations involved. The criteria for identifying best practice (if these exist at all) thus tend to be particular to the organisation and not based on objective criteria. This factor again makes it difficult to arrive at an overall model. What is presented is a very general and tentative outline of a model for best practice. These limitations must be taken into account in assessing the usefulness of this report.

OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

Section One outlines the policy context of early school-leaving, preventative education and educational disadvantage. We examine the nature and scale of early school-leaving both nationally and in the Dublin area. Included is a profile of early school-leavers, their gender and class characteristics. The outline of policy refers to the White Papers on Education and Early Childhood Education, the Education (Welfare) Bill, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, etc. There is a special emphasis in this section on the integration of services, which has become the buzzword in both the policy arena and the field itself.

Section Two outlines the different types of preventative education measures currently being implemented in Dublin. The major distinction is between national and local measures, with the main player in the first category being the Department of Education and Science while the Area-Based Partnerships are now playing a major role in the second category. The first category includes the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL), Breaking the Cycle and Early Start, while the second category includes such colourful monikers as JETS, APPLE, CHOICES and CLOVER. This outline is not comprehensive and principally identifies those projects for which reports and evaluations have been printed or published.

Section Three summarises our survey of the reports and evaluations of these measures and outlines a number of elements that have been identified in the literature as contributing to a model for best practice. We emphasise, in particular, the importance of inter-personal and inter-agency issues in the delivery of successful preventative education.

The Conclusions and Recommendations Section provides a summary of the report, and sets out recommendations for the development of models of best practice in early school-leaving and preventative education programmes.

A series of Appendices provides a range of supportive information and data. The most important is Appendix C, an extract from *OECD Education Indicators,* which puts a select number of issues in a global context. Appendix D is useful in providing a more local set of information based on the Baseline Data Reports for the Dublin Partnership Areas prepared from the 1996 Census.

SECTION ONE

The Policy Context of Preventative Education in Ireland

Introduction

The Nature and Scale of Early School Leaving

Profile of Early School Leavers

National Policy on Preventative Education

Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

MUCH has been written on educational disadvantage, early school-leaving and social inclusion. Focus groups, EU initiatives, state-run programmes, national policy documents and local reports - all have added to the debate on early school-leaving and the best ways in which it might be addressed. The purpose of this section is to sift through this large quantity of policy and advocacy work, in an effort to lay the basis for a discussion of existing provision.

In this section, the following issues are examined:

- ☐ The nature and scale of early school-leaving
- ☐ Profile of early school-leavers
- ☐ National policy on preventative education

THE NATURE AND SCALE OF EARLY SCHOOL-LEAVING

The National Situation

There is an acknowledgement in the literature on educational disadvantage that Ireland is not in a disastrous situation. As Rourke (1994: 7) pointed out, "the level of educational failure in Ireland is not noticeably higher than in other European countries." The 1998 ESRI Annual School-leavers Survey (of 1996/97 leavers) shows that the percentage leaving school with no qualifications has fallen from 6.9 per cent (1986) to 3.5 per cent (1998). However, the overall retention rate, calculated using ESRI data on Leaving Certificate leavers as a proportion of overall 1996/1997 leavers, is 81 per cent, the same as that for the previous two years.[1]

The main figure quoted regarding early school-leaving is that provided by the 1996 ESF study. It stated that 15,000 students leave every year before they complete the Leaving Certificate. The NESF report from 1997 provides other figures for 1993-1995, which break down the overall figures as follows:

- ☐ Up to 1,000 did not progress to second-level school at all
- ☐ 3,000 left second-level school with no qualifications
- ☐ 7,600 left school having completed the Junior Certificate only; of which 2,400 failed to achieve 5 passes in the Junior Certificate
- ☐ 2,600 young people left school having completed the Junior Certificate and an APT only
- ☐ Around 7,000 did not achieve 5 passes in the Leaving Certificate exam (NESF, 1997: 39).

This is an improvement on the 1976 figures, where only 60 per cent completed the Leaving Certificate (ADM, 1999a: 8). The figure has been steadily improving. As Devine (1998: 5) puts it,

> *surveys by the Department of Labour and the Economic and Social Research Institute throughout the 1980s and the 1990s indicate that more students are remaining in school and that the rate of participation in full-time education has been steadily improving.*

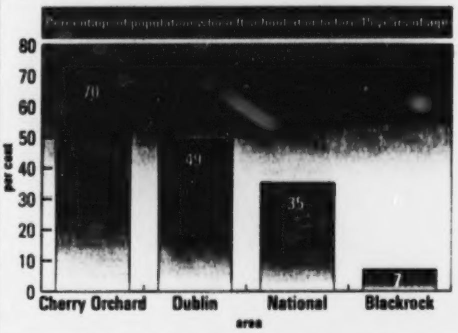
Early School-leaving in Dublin

There is, however, a long history and culture of early school-leaving in Ireland. Twenty four per cent of the adult population left school before 15 years of age, and 35 per cent left before the age of 16 (CSO, 1998: 21). One in five people in the labour force is only educated to Primary level. The Dublin region has a population over 15 years of age of 825,000 and almost 100,000 of these left school at 16 years or under (CSO, 1998: 38). How does Dublin compare with the rest of the country? Data compiled by Gamma from the 1996 Census suggest that Dublin fares far worse as regards its history of early school-leaving (See Figure 1.1). 45 per cent of the Dublin region population left school at or before 15 years of age, compared to 35 per cent nationally. The localised nature of the pattern is clear: in some areas the figure drops to below 7 per cent but in the poorest areas it can rise to 70 per cent. In particular, the designated disadvantaged areas in Dublin have serious levels of early school-leaving. 43 of the 100 most disadvantaged District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) in the Republic are located in Dublin, and of the 223 DEDs in the Partnership Areas in Dublin, 54 (or 25%) – twice the national rate – are among the poorest ten percent of DEDs.

---

[1] In the 1996/97 year, 3.5 per cent (2,500) left with no qualifications, while 15.5 per cent (10,800) left with either the Group Certificate or Junior Cycle, but no Leaving Certificate. Nationally, there were 69,700 school-leavers in the 1996-1997 year.

Figure 1.1:
Early school-leaving, Dublin and National figures



(Source: ADM (1998) Baseline data report. Dublin: Gamma)

International Comparisons

Education indicators in other OECD countries put early school-leaving and related issues in a wider context (See Figure 1.2). Without having detailed comparative figures for early school-leaving, other comparisons indicate the relative position of the Irish educational system compared to other countries. Fifty percent of the Irish adult population between the ages 25-64 left school early, i.e. before upper secondary level. This compares with the United States with only 14 per cent and Norway with only 18 per cent leaving school before upper secondary level. Only six other countries[2] are worse off than Ireland (See Appendix C for more information on the OECD Indicators).

PROFILE OF EARLY SCHOOL-LEAVERS

Socio-Economic Background of Early School-leavers

But if the figures have improved over the years, why is there so much attention paid to early school-leaving? As Boldt and Devine point out (1998: 13), while the percentage of early school-leavers has decreased significantly over the last 15 years, "the problem persists." The persistence of the problem is on a scale that means that it continues to impact to a major extent on the futures of those who leave school early.

> *The consequences of educational failure have become more serious over time, those without qualifications – drawn mostly from lower working class backgrounds – being more and more limited to unskilled manual occupations at high risk of unemployment. . . . A priority must be to address the needs of this particularly disadvantaged group. (Nolan and Callan, 1994: 318, quoted in Devine, 1998: 5)*

According to the NESF report (1997: 25), "there also appears to be a much higher rate of turnover among the least qualified, with much lower probabilities of getting a secure long-term job."

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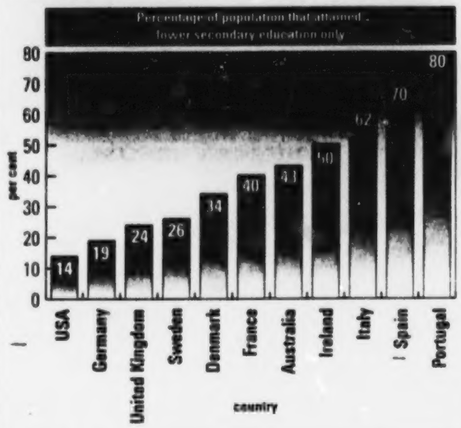
[2] Turkey (83 per cent, Spain (70 per cent), Portugal (80 per cent), Luxembourg (71 per cent), Italy, 62 per cent) and Greece (56 per cent). See Appendix C, Table C.1 for more detail.

Figure 1.2:
Educational attainment – international comparisons



(Source: OECD (1998) Education at a glance – Education indicators 1998 Paris: OICD)

According to the 1998 early school-leavers survey (McCoy *et al*, 1999), 54 per cent of school-leavers with no qualifications remain unemployed. This falls to 21 per cent for those with a Junior Certificate. The employment rates are equally revealing. Forty percent of those leaving in 1996-1997 with no qualifications were employed and 76 per cent of those leaving with a Junior Certificate were employed.

One striking characteristic of early school-leavers is their socio-economic background. According to the ESF evaluation report (1996: 9), 85 per cent of early school-leavers come from working class or small farming backgrounds.[3] Socio-economic status continues to exert a strong influence on both educational participation and job prospects. Over 60 per cent of children whose fathers belonged to higher/lower professional groups were students as compared with 17 per cent of those whose fathers are unemployed. Thirty per cent of those whose fathers are unemployed are unemployed themselves, compared with 5 per cent of those whose fathers belonged to the higher/lower professional category (McCoy *et al*, 1998). These findings are in agreement with O'Sullivan (1999, p. 15).

Gender factors

Gender also constitutes a significant variable. A higher proportion of boys leave school early with no qualifications (64 per cent male, 36 per cent female). Employment is 16 per cent lower for girls, at least partly due to higher female educational participation, and a higher proportion of girls being 'unavailable for work' (McCoy *et al*, 1999).

Geographical concentrations

There appears to be a certain amount of confusion regarding the influence of geography on early school-leaving. Hannan (1986) found that early school-leaving was most prevalent in large cities, in the Ulster counties and Co. Louth. He also pointed out that certain schools were more affected than others. A recent City of Dublin VEC study confirms this (O'Sullivan, 1999: 6).

> *Early school-leaving is quite prevalent in certain kinds of schools – those that cater mainly for working-class children, or children from small farms or from families of unemployed manual workers, vocational schools and schools in which the poorly educated are selectively concentrated.* (Hannan, 1986: 85)

The Gamma analysis of the 1996 Census data (ADM, 1998) suggests that early school-leaving is correlated with specific locations – those scoring lowest on the deprivation index (See Appendix D for an examination of these findings). Boldt and Devine, however, argue that it would be incorrect to see it as a problem only for certain areas. It could also be argued that seeing it as a problem for certain schools in particular geographical areas might be missing the main point: that early school-leaving is heavily correlated with socio-economic background.

---

[3] This correlation has been recognised for some time. Breen (1984) found that a large percentage of early school-leavers had fathers who were unemployed or did not have steady jobs. Also in this regard, the Sexton *et al* (1988: 20) study found that "no less than 46 per cent of (unskilled manual workers') children leave school without having attained any qualifications" (quoted in Boldt and Devine, 1998: 17).

This is an issue identified as significant in the ESF (1996) evaluation of early school-leaving provision. The report indicates that the Irish education system is not doing enough to ensure opportunities for children of working-class backgrounds.

> *The level of representation of students of lower socio-economic status at second level senior cycle and third level education, betrays the relative inefficacy of the education system to counter the economic and social disadvantage of many of its clients to date and its failure to adapt itself to the requirements of all of its clientele, particularly those from backgrounds which are not traditionally associated with an extended stay in education.*
> (Summary Report, ESF, 1996: 2)

Early school-leaving is not purely an urban phenomenon, and Rourke (1994: 8) goes so far as to say that "the problems faced by disadvantaged young people in rural areas are often more extreme than those of their urban counterparts." The problem of early school-leaving is replicated in towns and rural areas but the life experience and family background varies between town and country (Fleming and Kenny, 1998: 12). Nevertheless, Dublin does have "the greatest concentration of disadvantage" (Kellaghan *et al*, 1995: 47-48). Dublin, in fact, receives the most support from the Department of Education and Science's Scheme of Assistance to Schools in Designated Areas of Disadvantage.

NATIONAL POLICY ON PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION

Early school-leaving, as a manifestation of educational disadvantage, has become a priority in national policy over the last 15 years. Successive Ministers for Education have prioritised measures to counteract educational disadvantage – reflected in the development of such programmes as the Home School Community Liaison Scheme, Breaking the Cycle, Early Start and the 8-15 Early School-leavers Initiative. In June 1999 Minister for Education Micheál Martin announced that he would allocate additional resources to tackle early school-leaving, and in so doing provide continuity to the priority placed on preventative education. These resources, in the form of £4.5m (Stay in School Initiative), are designed to empower schools to tackle the problem themselves (DES, June 1999). According to the Minister, "not finishing school is the most significant cause of keeping people caught in cycles of disadvantage and it must be a key national priority to radically address this problem."

More importantly, the Department has announced that £5.3bn under the National Development Plan is earmarked for education. Of this, approximately £440m is to be provided for initiatives designed to combat educational disadvantage. According to the press release (DES, November 1999), this constitutes an "unprecedented underpinning and expansion of programmes across the next 7 years."

The New Deal – A Plan for Educational Opportunity makes available £194m, and "involves every level of the education system, including pre-school and adult literacy and will also provide the funding for a complete revision of targeted disadvantaged schools" (DES, December 1999).

The April 1999 publication of the Education (Welfare) Bill contributed to the policy context of early school-leaving. According to the Minister (DES, April, 1999: 8), the Bill provides a new and structured approach to school attendance issues. In this regard, it

- ☐ Recognises the complexity of the issues surrounding and determining school non-attendance and early school-leaving.

- Takes a pro-active rather than reactive approach to dealing with these issues.
- Seeks to promote positive attitudes to school attendance rather than merely sanction poor school attendance.

The overall aim of the Bill is to encourage young people to remain in the education system. Measures such as the raising of the school-leaving age to 16 (or completion of three years post-primary education) and the establishment of a National Education Welfare Board are designed with this in mind.[4]

Although it does not focus specifically on combating early school-leaving, the White Paper on Early Childhood Education, *Ready to Learn*, (DES, 2000), places heavy emphasis on educational disadvantage. The principal objective of Government policy in regard to early childhood education, as outlined in the White Paper, is

> *to support the development and educational achievement of children through high quality early education, with particular focus on the target groups of the disadvantaged and those with special needs. (DES, 2000)*

Early interventions are viewed as essential in terms of later behaviour and development.

> *The nature of the opportunities and the supports provided for a child's development during the formative period, and the quality of the educational experiences over this period, can have a far-reaching effect on the individual's long-term development and prospects.* (DES, 2000)

An emphasis on tackling educational disadvantage has also featured in various programmes for Government and in the National Agreements between social partners. Partnership 2000, for example, lists the following objectives as top priority:

- Breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty and disadvantage.
- Increasing retention rates and completion rates in primary and second level education.
- Mainstreaming of good practice from programmes like EU Youthstart.
- Addressing the requirements of children with special needs.
- Providing a continuum of education for adults and community groups including 'second chance' education.

The *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* (2000: 106) proposes to "eliminate unqualified early school-leaving... and significantly increase school completion to upper second level." One of the objectives of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy is "to eliminate the problem of early school-leaving before the Junior Certificate and reduce early school-leaving such that the percentage of those completing the senior cycle will increase to at least 90 per cent by the year 2000 and 98 per cent by the year 2007." The *Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development* (94-99) placed emphasis on preventative education, one of its main aims being "to provide an integrated approach to local development through a cohesive framework which will assist in promoting education and training measures to prevent early school-leaving leading to social exclusion."

There is certainly an increased interest in the question of early school-leaving, and the above policy measures signify a sustained political will to address early school-leaving and educational disadvantage in general.
The next question is: What are the main issues that have arisen within this debate at

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[4] The Bill provides for the establishment of welfare officers who will have a wide range of responsibilities for ensuring and enforcing school attendance. They will also be able to inspect attendance records in schools and the officers must be notified by schools of absent, suspended or expelled students. Schools will be expected to have a statement of strategy in place to encourage regular attendance and will engage proactively with children at risk. The welfare officers will have a role in identifying early school-leavers; establishing contact with families, youth services and other schools, and identifying aspects of school management and curriculum that may lead to truancy. It will be an offence to employ a child during school hours and the school-leaving age will be increased from 15 to 16 years (Doyle, 2000, p. 16).

The Board and employers will have a role to play in identifying all young people under 18 years of age who leave school without adequate qualifications and will assist in accessing continuing education and training. This is consistent with trends in the EU where the worlds of work and learning are increasingly seen as intertwined (Durand-Drouchin, M. *et al.*, 1998, p. 3).

national level? Boldt and Devine (1998: 10) provide a summary of these issues. They argue that the debate concerning national policy covers three areas. We can focus on two of them (their final area - addressing the problem of early school-leaving - is the focus of the present report):

- ☐ Developing partnerships and co-ordinating government services
- ☐ Targeting and re-structuring resources and provision within the formal education system

This outline can be used to make sense of current policy, and provide a framework within which issues concerning preventative education can be addressed.

Developing partnerships and co-ordinating government services

The issue of integrating services in the form of partnerships is the main focus of policy and practice in approaches to combating social exclusion, whether educational or other forms of disadvantage. This is evident from both policy documents and the literature developed around these issues. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1995: 1) argued for the establishment of institutional mechanisms "to ensure... appropriate co-ordination across and between department policy" in the area of early school-leaving. The National Economic and Social Forum (1997: 92) recommended "the development of partnership between parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, schools, youth organisations and other education and training agencies."

The CEO of Area Development Management talks about the contribution of local development (Crooks, 1999: 12) in tackling social exclusion and argues that a partnership approach should be encouraged. "A partnership at local level between the community sector, the social partners and state agencies increases co-operation, co-ordination and effective decision-making." It is difficult to find written material on early school-leaving and preventative education that does not refer to the issue of integration at some stage. It is often accompanied by a focus on partnership between different sectors and agencies, particularly at the local level.

Why has the concept of integration achieved such significance in Irish policy? A definition of integration is useful in this context and the OECD (1996) provides one with regard to the provision of local services.

> *Services integration refers primarily to ways of organizing the delivery of services to people at the local level ... it is not a new programme to be superimposed over existing programmes; rather it is a process aimed at developing an integrated framework within which ongoing programmes can be rationalized and enriched to do a better job of making services available within existing commitments and resources.*

An integrated approach is viewed by both policy makers and practitioners as providing at least some of the elements for a model of best practice. As Boldt and Devine (1998) and Stokes (1999a) argue, the perception of early school-leaving measures is that focusing solely on the education system is not sufficient to address the wide range of factors associated with the problem. Kellaghan *et al* (1995: 6) put this new focus on integration in historical context.

> *Today's proposed solutions are likely to involve a range of agencies even if the focus is on one institution, such as the home or the school. Programmes of urban regeneration, for example, are likely to require co-operation among agencies involved in employment, social work, housing, and health, as well as education. Thus, the supreme confidence of the 1960s that*

> *educational provision on its own could solve the problems of disadvantage, a view that gave way to a pessimism in the 1970s about what education could achieve, has now been replaced by the view that while education has a necessary role to play, that role is not sufficient in itself to deal with disadvantage.*

The integrated service approach is viewed as a means for avoiding several pitfalls. An Irish Vocational Education Association policy document (1999: 1) argued for the development of a co-ordinated and integrated approach to early school-leavers, in the belief that this would lead to:

☐ The delivery of a more effective service to students and their families.
☐ Avoid duplication in services.
☐ Promote the development of a shared vision amongst the professionals and agencies involved.
☐ Avoid fragmentation in service delivery.

Rourke (1999: 9), in his overview of the integrated approach offered by the Combat Poverty Agency's Demonstration Programme on Education Disadvantage, added several further positive outcomes of integration:

☐ A wider range of services can be offered.
☐ Awareness of a range of approaches.
☐ A greater understanding of the multi-dimensional needs of many young people.
☐ Relationships were developed.

There is increased awareness about the negative implications of not having an integrated approach - duplication and fragmentation of services being two of the more significant issues (National Youth Federation, 1998). Cullen (1997a: 25) details the lessons to be learned by Irish policy makers and practitioners from the experiences of integrated services elsewhere. These are outlined in Table 1.1

Targeting and re-structuring resources and provision within the formal education system

The targeting and re-structuring of resources in the education system is linked to the first policy issue of developing partnerships for integrated services. As the National Youth Federation argues (1998: 38-39), provision within the formal education system needs to take account of existing provision:

> *It is our belief that many of the new measures are often put in place without due recognition being given to how the role of existing services might be expanded and enhanced to cater for new needs and without adequate analysis of where new initiatives might best be placed to cater for those in greatest need. This is leading to duplication, rivalry for limited funding and inequality in resources between initiatives.*

In the formal education system, there has been an increasing emphasis placed on pre-school interventions. As Kellaghan *et al* (1995: 6) put it, "early intervention is accorded a special place when the allocation of additional resources is being considered. There is ample evidence relating to children's development—on its cumulative nature and on the importance of early experience—to support this view." The White Paper on Education (Department of Education, 1995: 16) argued that

☐ Early childhood experiences are important for the child's development.
☐ Entry to formal schooling is a major transition for children, particularly those from disadvantaged back-grounds.
☐ Early disadvantage affects the child's experience within formal schooling, because such disadvantages tend to be both persistent and cumulative.

The targeting and re-structuring processes over the last five years have been towards

Table 1.1:	Integrated services – lessons from overseas
Across the board service integration	Service integration needs to be established at all levels – policy, management and service delivery – and not just at the local level. "There would be little point in making progress on the more effective co-ordination of local initiatives if mechanisms for influencing wider developments on policies, structures, incentives and programmes were absent."
Focus on existing provision	Cullen argues that the focus should be on "integrating what is already there and not simply the creation of new services." According to Cullen, there is a danger that when different stakeholders come together to form locally integrated initiatives, they spend their energies on identifying gaps in provision rather than working to improve current provision.
Resources	Funding is required to support the process of integration. There is also a need to make available adequate time and other resources, in order to ensure ownership among participants.
Staffing	The staffing on integrated services is a crucial variable in the success or otherwise of interventions. According to Cullen, how personnel relate to new organizational developments is not fully understood. This lack of understanding has serious ramifications for the service. "In the absence of this understanding, resistance within organizations develops alongside a re-dedication to long-standing rules, regulations and behaviours." Also, Cullen states that the co-ordinators of the projects play a critical role in contributing to successful outcomes.
Wider societal context	Early school-leaving programmes cannot work as a panacea for all of society's ills. Although a crucial determinant of future employment status, education initiatives need to take place alongside other projects geared towards social and economic development.
Research and evaluation	Cullen (1997: 27) makes a final point about research and evaluation. From his analysis of integrated services elsewhere, it appears that evaluations have a crucial part to play in shaping integration initiatives as these develop.

(Adapted from Cullen, 1997: 25)

schools in identifiable disadvantaged areas. This has come about in particular as a result of the White Paper on Education. As Kellaghan *et al* (1995: 65) put it, one important aspect of government policy relates to targeting additional resources where problems of inequality and disadvantage exist. "This position is based on the premise that since children are unequally prepared when they start school, differential treatment is required in the school to promote their educational development." Previously, the National Education Convention (Coolahan, 1994: 107) highlighted the need for targeting resources and interventions to undermine educational disadvantage.

CONCLUSION

The present report is concerned with identifying elements for a model of best practice in the field of early school-leaving preventative measures. This section examined some of the key policy issues surrounding such measures. Three major issues emerge:

First of all, early school-leaving is a significant issue in government policy, for agencies and NGOs. Pressure is being generated from many sources, not least of these Government itself, which has made available large sums of money to alleviate educational disadvantage. It also appears that the majority of policy initiatives designed to tackle 'social exclusion' have included proposals to combat early school-leaving. It is as if the government is attempting to ESL-proof ('early school-leaving' proof) social policy and initiatives.

Second, although there is great emphasis on early school-leaving and educational disadvantage in government policy approaches, there is little recognition that early school-leaving is strongly linked to socio-economic background. The vast majority of pupils who withdraw before gaining a Leaving Certificate come from unskilled, semi-skilled or small farming backgrounds. Despite this stark national profile, policy still seems to be geared towards certain schools, certain districts or certain pupils, rather than towards the structure of Irish society in general.

Third, the debate surrounding best practice in preventative education - which measures are effective and which are not - has highlighted the importance of both *organisation* and the level and type of *resources* available to preventative education. *Organisational* issues - integration of services in particular - are seen as key aspects of a successful programme. Combined with effective *resourcing*, both human (staffing) and material (funding, time), an integrated measure appears to provide the best basis for successful interventions.

These policy initiatives and proposals base their claims on theoretical arguments or evidence from overseas. In the following section, measures developed in Dublin over the past number of years are outlined, providing a basis for identifying a model for best practice.

SECTION TWO

A Description of Early School-leaving Measures in Dublin

Introduction

Department of Education and Science Measures

Local Measures

Discussion & Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH a considerable amount has been written about preventative education and early school-leaving measures, the literature tends to be fragmented, focussing on a particular type of measure, or blurring the boundaries between them so that confusion persists regarding the nature and layout of this recent field of activity. Although connections exist between them, especially in terms of funding and resources, early school-leaving measures can be divided into three main types:

- Department of Education and Science Programmes
- Other National Programmes
- Local Preventative Education Measures

These programmes operate on different levels. For instance, some are geared to different stages in the education process – pre-school, primary or post-primary – or to transitions between these levels. Another distinction is that the programmes and initiatives are geared towards developing certain capacities either in the pupils themselves or their environment. Some focus on developing children's self-confidence, others place the emphasis on working with the parents to indirectly affect the child's development. Many gear their interventions towards instilling values regarding the importance of staying in school, while others attempt to transform the social context within which the child is under-achieving (changes to school curriculum, teacher training, building integrated services, establishing partnerships).

Many interventions involve more than one of these emphases, and have several layers to their structures. Most measures also have a great deal in common. This section outlines some of their characteristics, while the following section brings together the findings of evaluations and reports and outlines the elements that may contribute to a model of best practice in preventative education.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE MEASURES

In 1990, the Department of Education established the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme. This provided support for concessionary teaching posts, the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and grants for general management and schoolbooks. More recently, the remit of the Scheme has widened to include the following:

- Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)
- Early Start Programme
- Breaking the Cycle
- Curriculum
- Remedial teachers
- Educational psychologists
- Teachers counsellors
- 8-15 initiative
- Stay in School Initiative
- Junior Certificate School Programme
- Youth Encounter
- Transition Year

318 designated primary schools and 190 designated second level schools are supported under the Disadvantaged Areas Scheme. Estimates from the Department of Education and Science indicate that approximately £43m was spent on the Scheme overall.

Home-School Community Liaison Scheme

This is a preventative strategy targeted at parents, school staff and other relevant community agencies.

> *It is concerned with establishing partnership and collaboration between parents and teachers in the interests of children's*

> *learning. It focuses directly on the salient adults in children's educational lives and seeks indirect benefits for the children themselves.*
> (Department of Education, May 1997)

The scheme began in 1990 with the appointment of 30 teachers as liaison co-ordinators in 55 primary schools in large designated areas of urban disadvantage (Department of Education, May 1997). Between 1992 and 1995, the scheme was extended to 105 co-ordinators serving 106 primary schools and 83 co-ordinators serving 84 schools at secondary level (1996/1997 year).

The **aims** of the Scheme are:

- ❑ To maximise active participation by the parents of children in the schools concerned in the learning process, in particular of those who might be at risk of failure.
- ❑ To promote active co-operation between home, the school and the relevant community agencies in developing the educational interests of the children.
- ❑ To raise awareness in parents of their own capacities to enhance their children's educational progress and to assist them in developing relevant skills
- ❑ To enhance the children's uptake from education, their retention in the educational system, their continuation to post-compulsory and to third level education and their attitudes to lifelong learning.
- ❑ To disseminate the positive outcomes of the Scheme throughout the school system generally.

According to Coolahan (1994: 109, quoted in Devine, 1999: 79), "the extension, development and 'mainstreaming' of the Home-School-Community Liaison project to disadvantaged schools was universally welcomed." The Kellaghan *et al* report also had some favourable things to say about the HSCL scheme:

> *There is some evidence that as a result of all these activities, parents became more aware of, and confident about, their capacities to enhance their children's educational development. Community-based activities received less emphasis than ones involving homes and schools.*
> (Kellaghan et al, 1995: 18-19)

More recently, Devine (1999a: 79) states that the HSCL "seems to have developed a successful approach to intervention at both primary and second level." According to the ESF report of 1997, there are three challenges that face the HSCL programme:

> *Its future success will require higher levels of involvement of the most needy parents, greater delegation of responsibility to already participating parents and more participation by school staff. Each of these challenges is interlinked. Greater delegation of responsibility to participating parents should result in their bringing on board more uninvolved needy parents, thus freeing up co-ordinator time for greater levels of activity with school staff.* (ESF, 1997: 109)

Early Start Programme

The Early Start Programme is a one-year preventative programme for 3-year-old children in disadvantaged communities. It is based on the belief that "a high quality early childhood service can play an important part in offsetting the effects of socio-economic disadvantage and make a contribution to the alleviation of its educational effects" (ESF, 1997: 33). It was established in 40 school centres in areas of disadvantage (26 schools or 65 per cent of the total in Dublin).
The **aim** of Early Start is to "enhance the overall development of pre-school children and prevent school failure" (National Youth Federation, 1998: 26).

The concept of partnership is central to Early Start, as is the involvement of parents

(Devine, 1999a: 29). Also, the proposal was to involve second-level transition students as part of their work experience requirement (ESF, 1997: 34). "Both of these elements represent an opportunity for the development of a partnership between the community and the Department of Education and the participation of the community in the development of this service."

The National Economic and Social Forum (1997: 53) argued that the introduction of Early Start resulted in "displacing some existing community-based child-care services. This resulted in the disempowerment of some of the more active women from disadvantaged communities." It went on to say that "it was not acceptable ... that one form of disadvantage (early school-leaving) should be catered for by creating another form of disadvantage for women who were providing a useful service."

However, according to McGough (1999: 73), the partnership approach is essential to the provision of an integrated approach to pre-school education:

> *A comprehensive model of early intervention requires a number of levels of supports to families from a number of avenues, agencies and professionals...there is a need for close links and liaison between all the elements in this web of support, each having its own clearly defined role, each supporting and contributing to the effectiveness of the other. Within this social support model, formal intervention programmes, such as Early Start, have a crucial and specific role to play.*

Breaking the Cycle (Primary)

In 1995, Niamh Breathnach, the then Minister for Education, commissioned the Combat Poverty Agency and the Education Research Centre to conduct a study of approaches to identifying and supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This formed the basis of the Kellaghan *et al* Report of 1995. It recommended a more targeted approach in the Department's strategies, and the initiation of positive discrimination in favour of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Breaking the Cycle project was launched in response to these recommendations, targeting a programme of supports to 25 selected schools in disadvantaged areas nationally.

This programme was "based on targeting resources, using revised criteria, to identify schools in the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas, with the provision of additional supports for these schools and the requirement that each school included in the scheme should prepare and submit a five-year development plan" (NESF, 1997: 11).

According to Boldt and Devine (1998: 8), in general Breaking the Cycle has been received favourably. As McCormack and Archer put it (1998: 13), "the new initiatives (BTC) will facilitate a more intensified and varied type of intervention than has been tried before. ... the schemes will result in genuine positive discrimination."

Some other comments need to be made regarding the BTC project. One limitation pointed out by McCormack and Archer is that some disadvantaged schools have not been included. Also NAPS questioned the focus on schools rather than students, because:

- ❑ Only schools with a sufficiently high proportion of disadvantaged pupils receive extra support.
- ❑ Schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils, but where the overall proportion is not sufficiently high to rank in the score system, receive no extra support - impacting particularly on rural areas.

- Certain schools are identified as disadvantaged while the neighbouring school attended by brothers and sisters of the same family is not (NAPS, 1996: 27).

Curriculum – Primary Level

Recent developments have taken place in the area of curriculum reform. The major development is the first significant revision of the primary school curriculum since 1971. This revised curriculum was launched in September 1999, and £5m has been allocated to support its introduction. The focus is on the child as a learner, and aims to provide a holistic approach to child development and education. Included in the new curriculum are:

- A new Irish curriculum, based on a communicative approach.
- A revised English curriculum, with new approaches to language learning, reading and writing.
- Greater emphasis in the Mathematics curriculum on problem solving.
- Rationale for the arts as a whole.
- New emphasis on Music and Drama as a new area of study.
- A wide-ranging PE curriculum.
- Social, personal and health education (DES, September 1999).

Curriculum – Secondary Level

Alongside these changes in the Primary Curriculum, there is also a recognition that the traditional secondary school curriculum does not always provide a meaningful or relevant response to the needs of those pupils who would benefit from a more vocational and practically orientated programme. The Junior Certificate School Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied are the major developments in this area. The Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) began work on the Junior Certificate School Programme in 1994. The Programme is aimed at schools with a high level of educational disadvantage, and is designed to cater for and retain pupils in the education system who are unlikely to succeed in the mainstream education programme. According to the ESF evaluation (1997: 68), the underlying assumption of the programme is that,

> *given suitable conditions and with appropriate guidance, all students in mainstream schools can acquire reading, writing and basic number skills, cultivate language and literacy skills and achieve a level of social and personal competence. In combination, these skills should enable them to cope with and enhance their experience of school and of everyday life, and equip them to engage in reflection, self-examination and critical analysis of the world around them.*

The idea is to "enable these young people to benefit from their time in school and to enjoy the experience of improvement and success" (O'Brien, 1999: 14). Although the ESF report indicates that the Junior Programme is a positive development in general, there should be some concern regarding its "potential to limit pupil aspirations, the value that is placed on their certification by employers and the availability of progression routes offered by this certification" (ESF, 1997: 110). The report recommends that practical responses to these issues should be included in the curriculum design.

The Leaving Certificate Applied has received a favourable evaluation.

> *The objectives, design, structure, approach and content of the Leaving Certificate Applied suggest strongly that it is a sound educational programme providing valuable experiences and learning opportunities for students while offering a comprehensive Leaving Certificate alternative to the traditionally academically focused programme.... In general, those who have been*

> *involved in the Leaving Certificate Applied consider it to be successful in addressing the educational needs of students, in responding to many of their personal and social needs and hence, successful as preparation for adult and working life.*
> (Boldt, 1998: 42)

The following are brief descriptions of other preventative education programmes funded by the Department of Education and Science.

Youth Encounter Projects

These are special schools for children of primary school age who are at risk of or have been in trouble with the law. The project offers these children the opportunity of remaining in primary education within special schools. These schools also provide supports to families through social work and probation and welfare workers attached to the schools.

Remedial Education Services

Remedial education services are part of the Department's Special Education Services. They aim to close the gap between actual and potential attainment levels and achieve this by providing additional specialised teaching on an individual or small group basis for children experiencing learning difficulties.

Psychological Support Services

1990 saw the introduction of Psychological Support Services for primary schools. Currently, areas of socio-economic disadvantage have priority in the development of the service. However, according to the ESF evaluation (1997: 66), the relevance of this service to disadvantaged children has been limited. At the same time,

> *in the context of a decentralised service, operating with a particular focus on disadvantaged areas, the primary level psychological service could take on a more active role in supporting front-line teachers working with educationally disadvantaged young people.*

Transition Year

The transition year has been recognised as the first year of a three-year senior cycle since the 1994/95 school year. The aim of the year is to promote personal development, social awareness and increased social competence

Support Teachers

There is a teaching support scheme at primary level involving support teachers (counsellors). Their role is to co-ordinate a whole school approach to devising and implementing good practice and strategies that will help to prevent the occurrence of disruptive behaviour. Support teachers at present are employed in schools in the deprived areas of the North Inner City and the Tallaght/Clondalkin areas of Dublin (O'Brien, 1999: 14).

OTHER NATIONAL MEASURES

Under this heading can be included the Urban Initiative, the Integrated Services Project and the Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage. Below we take a closer look at the Demonstration Programme.

Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage

The Combat Poverty Agency initiated the Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage in 1996 and it continued until 1999. The Programme "recognises the multi-dimensional nature of educational disadvantage and the need for integrated responses" (CPA information brochure). The Programme was based on a partnership approach to educational disadvantage at a local or district level and follows on from 14 pilot projects funded under the Once-off

Grants Scheme for Work with Disadvantaged Young People established in 1994 (Cullen, 1997).

It was designed to run for three 3 years, with two overall objectives:

- Establishing and supporting locally based networks to develop an integrated response to the problem of educational disadvantage within their area and to provide disadvantaged young people with opportunities to progress and transfer between the formal and informal education systems according to their needs and to maximize their participation in and benefit from these systems;
- Development of structures capable of influencing policy at national level drawing from local experience.

The Programme supports four networks of education providers nationally:

- Killinarden Education Network (KEN)
- Network for Educational Support, Tuam Area (NESTA)
- Drogheda Youth Educational Network
- Tralee Education Network (TEN)

Each of these networks includes representatives of schools, parents, training centres, area-based partnerships, youth groups, community groups and other voluntary and statutory organisations.

Integrated Services Process

The Integrated Services Process (ISP) is a Government funded project to promote the integration of state agency services, in consultation with local communities in targeted disadvantaged areas. A poor history of consultation, co-operation and integration between agencies and between these agencies and services users is one of the stumbling blocks to the effectiveness of existing service delivery. Traditionally, state agencies have not conducted their business in an integrated way and a culture of 'protecting one's own patch' has prevailed. This institutional bias has been compounded by the way the state is organised and by the functionally based programmes of different agencies. The aim of ISP is to develop new procedures by which statutory authorities can respond to the needs of communities (Ahern, 1999).

The Project is being developed under the direction of ADM in the following areas: Dublin's North East Inner City; St Michael's Estate, Dolphin House/Fatima Mansions/ St. Teresa's Gardens; Jobstown, Tallaght and Togher, Cork.

To date, state agencies have not targeted deprived urban communities differently. They have not developed policies that recognise and take into account the specific needs of people in these communities. The lessons learned by ISP in the targeted areas will be used to identify models of best practice that can be applied in other urban black spots. The lessons to be learned by State agencies in relation to service delivery should give concrete examples of where change has to take place.

The First Interim ISP Progress Report identified early school-leaving as a priority for action. It is the first time fundamental themes such as early school-leaving, localised services and family supports have been looked at within a geographic area (Ahern, 1999). This is a strong statement that, when linked with attempts to tackle social inclusion thematically through initiatives such as the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, indicates an important public policy priority.

Early School-leaving has emerged as the single greatest priority locally. One of the most important generic recommendations in the First Interim ISP Progress Report is the need to employ staff, especially on the front-line, with the requisite skills to engage effectively with local people. It also implies that central management must understand and empathise with the people on the ground (Ahern, 1999).

Youth groups and organisations, some funded by the state, play a major role in many of these interventions.

LOCAL MEASURES

This group of interventions covers a large number of projects, networks and activities. It operates as a catchall phrase for all measures that do not directly operate from the Department of Education and Science and do not have a national mandate. Some receive their funding from the Department or are provided with some other resource by the state. Other groups now parcel a number of measures under the one heading. This will become evident in the following outline.

Local measures in preventative education include:

- ❑ After School Projects
- ❑ Homework Clubs
- ❑ Transition Programmes
- ❑ Literacy and numeracy interventions
- ❑ Parenting initiatives
- ❑ Mentoring and tracking activities
- ❑ School - community initiatives
- ❑ Projects for socially excluded groups - travellers, etc.
- ❑ Third level access programmes

An interesting development in preventative education is the introduction of multi-intervention programmes based in local communities. Many – though not all – of these operate through the Area-Based Partnerships, and include many of the measures mentioned above as part of their remit. There has also been a tendency for these programmes to employ acronyms, in a similar fashion to community-based adult daytime education programmes.

Such programmes include the following:

- ❑ **APPLE**
  (Area Partnership Programme for Language Enrichment)
- ❑ **CARA**
  (Clondalkin Area Response to Absenteeism)
- ❑ **CHOICES**
  (Finglas-Cabra Partnership)
- ❑ **YSTU**
  (Youth Support and Training Unit)
  (Clondalkin Partnership)
- ❑ **BEST**
  (Ballymun Educational Support Team)
- ❑ **ESP**
  (Educational Support Project)
- ❑ SIS Project
  (Stay in School) (KWCD Partnership)
- ❑ **JETS**
  (Jobstown Education and Training Strategy)
- ❑ **PSI**
  (Primary School Initiative)
  (Dublin Inner City Partnership)
- ❑ **DFL**
  (Discipline for Learning)
- ❑ SFP
  (Stengthening Families Programme)
- ❑ **PESL**
  (Potential Early School-leavers Programme)
  (Blanchardstown Partnership)

Based on existing reports and evaluations, this section outlines the operations of some of these programmes at the time the reports were produced.

CARA (Clondalkin Area Response to Absenteeism)

CARA is a network that brings together representatives of the VEC schools, voluntary and community organisations, and parents.

The **aim** is to develop a co-ordinated response to the needs of young people at risk of leaving school early.

CARA has targeted 108 potential early school-leavers in 9 schools (based on attendance records; scores of standardised tests; older sibling retention within the school system; data from home visits; adherence of pupils to school behaviour code; and consultation with principals, Home-School Liaison Officers and year heads).

There are two main elements to the project: in-school and out-of-school. The in-school part of the project includes compiling a detailed profile of each participant; establishing a database and tracking system for young people; an early bird club; developing needs-based curriculum and a transfer programme between primary and second level; and a counselling service targeted at young people.

The out-of-school part includes a family support service; an after-school support programme; a summer support programme; developing capacity building programmes for parents; mentoring and teacher training.

CHOICES (Finglas Cabra Partnership)

CHOICES is a career and study support programme for primary and second level students, established by the Finglas-Cabra Partnership in 1995. Its **aim** is to:

☐ Maximise the achievement of young people while in school.
☐ Reduce early school-leaving.
☐ Improve educational attainment levels.

In this, CHOICES supports the following programmes:

☐ Careers advice and information
☐ Tutorials
☐ Pathways (Transfer programme from primary to second level)
☐ Supervised study centres
☐ Homework clubs
☐ Study clubs
☐ Parents in Education
☐ Action Research
☐ Certificate in Equality Studies
☐ Opt in

The programme offers young people a chance to explore the third level environment and subject areas of interest to them. In 1997, the Partnership successfully attracted additional EU funding under EU URBAN initiative, and appointed a full-time co-ordinator.

It is hoped that by offering a range of services, CHOICES will contribute to the improvement in educational provision and help increase attainment levels. It is also hoped that by taking part in a combination of the services on offer, students will be better equipped to make decisions about education and training options and hence their long-term career paths. Devine (1999a: 80) has some positive comments to make about CHOICES:

> *The intervention programmes operating within CHOICES seem to have great potential for addressing educational disadvantage in its target communities. Significant support is offered to students and schools, and there appears to be a high level of partnership and co-operation. As a model it seems to offer many opportunities for Partnerships and communities to assist students and support them in deriving greater benefit from their schooling.*

This positive feedback is supported by Sproule *et al* (1999: 34). According to them, the Partnership, working from a collaborative model, was "able to strengthen links between schools and encourage schools in embracing cross community links." They also outlined some of the key lessons emerging from the programme (1999: 34). These included:

- ☐ The need for local involvement in planning for change.
- ☐ The need for local structures to support change.
- ☐ The need for change in policy and practice at local as well as national level.
- ☐ The need for support for staff involved in effecting and managing change.

The Youth Support and Training Unit (YSTU)

The Youth Support and Training Unit started in August 1997 and is based in Clondalkin. It began as a pilot initiative in response to research that called for an alternative approach to dealing with early school-leavers in the Clondalkin area. It is funded by the Department of Tourism and the European Commission (through the South Dublin Urban Initiative) and is managed through Clondalkin Partnership.

The aim of the Unit is as follows:

To identify, access and support existing early school-leavers aged 15+ and to refer and link them to the service and training providers that are available in the area.

To achieve this objective, they provide:

- ☐ Outreach; one-to-one support;
- ☐ motivational interviewing;
- ☐ assessment and the development of an individual plan;
- ☐ support programmes such as the Activity and Breakthrough programmes;
- ☐ individual literacy classes and specialist referrals;
- ☐ tracking and monitoring a client's transition and progression.

> *The vision of the Unit is to identify existing early school-leavers in need and through the provision of individual support, assist their progress with a view to training and employment. Their work is needs-based and guided by principles of respect, openness, flexibility, commitment and inclusiveness. Their clients have the right to respect, understanding and support regardless of their situation or background; the right to quality education and training; and the right to mediation by the Unit with other agencies with regard to health and safety as these factors impact on their ability to access suitable training opportunities.* (Unique Perspectives, 1999: 1)

Blanchardstown Potential Early School-leavers Programme (PESL)

The Blanchardstown Potential Early School-leavers Programme is an inter-agency initiative involving two local national schools and one second-level school, Barnardos, Blanchardstown Youth Service and the Partnership.

The aim of the project is provide a positive response to the issues of educational disadvantage and early school-leaving in the Blanchardstown area. According to Rourke (1998b: 6), the main focus of PESL is on the transition of children and young people from primary to secondary education.

Based on the belief that they could identify potential future early school-leavers at the primary school stage, they devised a programme based on three components:

- ☐ After School Groups
- ☐ Summer Projects
- ☐ Parents' Programme

After School Groups:

These operate in the three schools and involve a combination of the following: practical and creative activities, outdoor pursuits and sport and group work/

discussions. Practical activities are about making a range of products such as jewellery and leather craft. Creative activity is about encouraging kids to "develop all their intelligences during the time that they spend with the programme... Through activities like drama, artwork, dance and video production, the after-school groups provide opportunities for young people to express themselves in a creative and imaginative manner." Outdoor pursuits are about getting kids involved in activities that would not normally be available to them. "Through the group work the young people are supposed to start taking responsibility for their own actions and to decide how they would like their group to be organised rather than being objects of other people's instructions and directions"
(Rourke, 1998b, p. 9).

Summer projects:

These involve activities in the area and trips to places outside the area - regarded as of particular importance to transition kids. These projects give them the opportunity to know Riversdale Community College and to become comfortable with their new school environment. The fact that they knew the layout of the school (they had been introduced to some of the teachers and had met other pupils who were also making the transition) was of significant assistance to a number of young people
(Rourke, 1998b, p. 9).

Parents' programme:

Involvement of the parents is an important aspect of the programme:

> *If the parents don't push their children to stay at school and are fairly lax about issues like school attendance and school examinations, it is more likely that these children will leave school early without any effective qualifications ... Work with parents has primarily involved a combination of home visits to the parents, and the organisation of events to which the parents are invited* (Rourke, 1998b: 10).

Ballymun Educational Support Team (BEST)

According to their mission statement, BEST

> *"wishes to develop programmes and to create a climate which will stimulate the interest and participation of young people between the ages of 8 and 15 years with a view to tackling early school-leaving." In doing so, BEST will endeavour to improve school attendance, behaviour and attainment; to promote parental, family and community involvement and to encourage the genuine and continued integration of services."*

BEST offers three types of support:

- ☐ In-School Support
- ☐ Half Way Facility
- ☐ Out of School Facility

In School Support:

This covers both primary and second level and includes work on:

- ☐ on a 1-to-1 or small group basis, with children identified as being at risk
- ☐ co-ordinating a structured caring approach within the school and compliment existing structures
- ☐ Providing support for both the child and the teacher.

Half Way Facility:

This is a 5-6 week programme developed for children who have been suspended from school because of disruptive behaviour. They have 9 places available - 5 primary and 4 post-primary. It involves: negotiating contracts between pupils, parents and school; continuation of the child's subject/class curriculum; self-esteem/ interpersonal skills/behaviour programme; repairing the relationship between pupil, parents and schools; and accessing appropriate resources and agencies.

Out of School facility:

This facility was developed for children who have effectively left mainstream education. There are 5 places available. It involves: developing a structured, child-centred programme of education and self-development; building on family links and supports; developing appropriate learning plans and progression routes.

Jobstown Education and Training Strategy (JETS)

JETS is an inter-agency programme designed to counter educational disadvantage in the Jobstown area of Tallaght. The agencies and organisations in the area came together to formulate a proposal to the Tallaght Partnership, which then provided £50,000 per annum for a four-year period beginning in 1996.

The partners involved are a senior National School, a local Community College, Barnardos, Youth Horizons, Tallaght Partnership and South Dublin Chamber of Commerce. Like many preventative education programmes, JETS was established on the belief that integration of services was best:

> *There was a belief that an inter-agency approach, involving the main players (e.g., schools, parents and organisations) could produce positive results in relation to potential early school-leavers making the transition from primary to post-primary education and completing their secondary cycle.*
>
> (Rourke, 1998: 1)

This is clearly stated in the JETS project plan (7: 1.4): "it is strongly felt by the management committee that isolated individual agency approaches have not been successful in realistically minimising the risk to children of leaving school early."

The primary objectives of JETS are:

- ☐ To produce innovative models of good practice and learning which will improve the retention in the formal education system of potential early school-leavers and therefore reduce educational disadvantage
- ☐ To enable the target group of 18 young people and their families to engage in the education system until at least their Junior Certificate.

The interventions include:

- ☐ 18-1 class size
- ☐ Class teachers dedicated to JETS group
- ☐ Class remains together for 4 years
- ☐ Summer projects between academic years
- ☐ Full-time co-ordinator employed to develop and support the project
- ☐ Homework support and after-school activities
- ☐ Visits to places of educational and recreational interest
- ☐ Provision of meals and books
- ☐ Significant contact and interaction with parents
- ☐ Evaluation and policy development

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There were many interesting developments in the 1990s in the field of preventative education. The types of measures and interventions presented in this section are distinct from the 'interventive' measures that preceded them in government policy, particularly YOUTHREACH. All the examples provided are based on the assumption that prevention is better than cure, and if pupils cannot be stopped from leaving school early, or if some children are not likely to be interested in academic courses, then at least they can be prepared for life outside school. This emphasis is viewed as essential, given the links between early school-leaving and indicators of social exclusion such as long-term unemployment.

Another shared characteristic is the amount of work and effort invested in such programmes. In many cases, the different agencies and individuals involved - teachers, schools, parents, health agencies, Gardaí, school attendance service and so on - cross professional boundaries in promoting preventative education.

Of course, there are differences too. Some measures target primary school while others view pre-school as the arena in which to tackle early school-leaving. Some are based in a single school while others work with a network of institutions. Many measures work with children defined as 'at risk' while some programmes work with all pupils.

But possibly the crucial way in which intervention measures differ is the way in which they identify the causes of early school-leaving. Some programmes are more explicit than others in this regard. For instance, the Educational Support Project sees the absence of social and personal skills as the key cause:

> *The emphasis on developing social and personal skills arises from teachers' perceptions that educational disadvantage reflects cultural and social differences between the school and the home. These differences can cause children to be either disruptive or withdrawn in the classroom and they are unable, as a result, to participate fully in the school's main academic programme.* (Cullen, 1997: 8)

The HSCL Scheme is built on similar assumptions, with a greater focus on the parents and on the social and cultural differences which exist between them and the ethos of the school. So, while the ESP emphasised the development of personal skills, HSCL focuses on developing a set of cultural values within the family conducive to children staying in school.

Sproule *et al* (1999: 39) developed an interesting model of interventions and this model sheds light on the assumptions which underpin early school-leaving measures in Dublin. Their own study, based on experiences of working with an Area Based Partnership, resulted in a series of recommendations. They included their proposed model as an overview and this provides the starting point for an interesting discussion. According to them, there are four main assumptions underlining programmes aimed at tackling educational disadvantage. Modified versions of these are outlined in Table 2.1 below.

Depending on the analysis used, the problem is identified as primarily personal, cultural, social or economic. While Sproule *et al* state that each of these explanations has some validity, they state: "In outlining these no attempt is being made to prioritise or 'favour' one frame over another but rather to show that a more holistic analysis is required to explain why young people underachieve" (1999: 32). Many might regard these different assumptions regarding cause to be mutually exclusive and decidedly non-neutral. However, it is the opinion of the authors of this report that Sproule and her colleagues inadvertently developed a schema which enables early school-leaving measures to be categorised in terms of their ability to provide different forms of *capital*. We will return to this issue later after outlining the elements of a model of best practice. These are based on the reports and evaluations available.

Table 2.1: An outline of assumptions underpinning early school-leaving measures in Dublin

Assumption	**Explanation**
Essentialism	A measure based on an essentialist paradigm believes that the problem is *personal* – low ability or low self-esteem.
Consensualism	A measure based on a consensual paradigm assumes that there is a *cultural* deficiency in the family, group or community from which the pupil derives.
Credentialism	A measure based on credentialism would argue that the problem lies within the organisation of the schooling and administrative system – what we might call a *social* deficiency (inflexible structures, curriculum design, teacher training, etc).
Exploitation	Finally, a measure that takes as its starting place the notion of exploitation, would argue that the cause of early school-leaving can be located in the broader structures of Irish society, that the failure "arises from the need to protect an economic system based on private profit" (Sproule *et al*, 1999: 39). The problem here is *economic.*

(Adapted from Sproule et al 1999: 39)

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SECTION THREE

Early School-leaving: Towards a Model for Best Practice

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

INTRODUCTION

THERE has been little work on the extent to which different intervention measures have been successful in reducing early school-leaving in their target areas. This is a major limitation of the research in this area. There is a tendency to focus on the processes involved in preventative education rather than the outcomes. This is because most projects and measures are at an early stage of development and it is difficult, therefore, to examine their impact on early school-leaving. The research is mainly based on the *perceived* benefits of measures to children or on their impacts on organisational and structural factors such as co-ordination of services or communication between parents and school.

The elements of a model of best practice for preventative education produced below were developed with this limitation in mind. They are based on a review of the written documentation available on preventative education measures in the Dublin area. These largely consist of evaluations, case studies and other reviews of policy and practice, and include studies of national programmes as well as of locally or Area-Based Partnership interventions. Although the recommendations of these case studies and evaluations differ on issues regarding the running of their respective projects, a general overview of the projects concerned allows certain general points to be developed. These can be divided into four distinct categories – human resources, material resources, internal organisation and external organisation. These categories are outlined below.

The elements of the four categories can be described as follows:

HUMAN RESOURCES

- ☐ *Staff Sensitivity*
- ☐ *Staff Commitment and Expertise*
- ☐ *Full-time Co-ordination of Project*

Table 3.1: Early School-leaving: Elements of a model for best practice

Category	Elements involved
Human Resources	**Staff Sensitivity** **Staff Commitment and Expertise** **Full-time Co-ordination of Project**
Material Resources	**Adequate Funding** **Adequate Time** **Early Intervention**
Internal Organisation	**Adaptable and Flexible Organisations** **Good Working Relationships** **Clear Lines of Communication** **Co-ordination and Integration of Services**
External Organisation	**Local Approaches** **Involvement of Pupils and Parents** **Dissemination of Information**

Staff Sensitivity

Several programmes pointed to the need for sensitivity training for teachers in relation to problems faced by educationally disadvantaged children. Boldt and Devine (1998: 12), referring to the work of Hannan, state that there is a need for awareness among teachers of the cultural and value differences which children bring with them into the classroom. The Special Initiative in Schools Project believes that this difference needs to be taken into account, particularly when it comes to the problem of discipline:

> *Children are not interacting with the educational system if they are regularly removed from it. This method of discipline does not promote children's engagement in the school, or their retention within the system. The schools should look at the issue of discipline and rewards, and could, for example, research the feasibility of running training courses in positive discipline for teachers. This is a problem area and a priority for action.* (Special Initiative in Schools Evaluation, 1998: 40)

The issue of staff sensitivity is frequently mentioned in the literature and this needs to be considered more fully. The ESF evaluation of the Department's preventative education measures emphasises this:

> *Criticisms were also made of low expectations and negative attitudes held by teachers of children coming from backgrounds of educational disadvantage... it was suggested that part of the problem arises in the existence of different and... clashing sets of cultural values, with teachers either unable or unwilling to engage the culture and values of the children who are presenting problems.* (ESF, 1997, pp. 92-93)

This issue of staff sensitivity extends to all levels of the system, and its importance was referred to recently by the Taoiseach in an address to senior civil servants (Ahern, 1999).

Staff Commitment and Expertise

Both the competence of the staff and their levels of commitment to preventative education projects have a crucial role to play in their success. This is the case with the Potential Early School-Leavers programme in Blanchardstown:

> *The impact and effectiveness of the PESL programme largely depends on the quality and management of the staff who are delivering the various actions and activities.... The calibre and enthusiasm of the programme staff is a key ingredient in the evolution of the overall programme – regardless of the overall design of the initiative it will not reach its full potential unless the people invested with responsibility for delivering the programme have the necessary skills and experiences.* (Rourke, 1998b: 23)

The level of teacher commitment can have major implications for a project's success. Boldt pointed this out with regard to the Primary School Initiatives:

> *The pivotal role of teachers in the success of any initiative was clear.... Respondents felt that some teachers may not see the value of these initiatives and therefore would not support them or adopt their methods in the classroom. There was a sense that teachers may be fearful of losing control in the class if they were to adopt a new approach or become involved in a new initiative.* (Boldt, 1996: 51)

Full-time Co-ordinators

The importance of having a full-time co-ordinator was expressed in several of the reports examined for the study. The JETS evaluation was adamant that a large part of its success was due to their co-ordinator:

> *The employment of a full-time co-ordinator has been quite central in the development and evolution of the JETS. The project would not have achieved what it has*

> *without the employment of this person. The co-ordinator has had the time and the skills to carry out tasks which otherwise would not have been possible. Given the other time constraints on teachers it would be extremely difficult to create the space required to have such an intensive relationship with the parents of the young people in the JETS project, to co-ordinate the different aspects of the project, to organise various events, to arrange and participate in various planning and review meetings, to disseminate the outcomes of the project to organisations like the Tallaght Partnership and URBAN, to produce policy documents on issues relating to early school-leaving and educational disadvantage, to closely track and monitor the attendance and academic progress of the young people on the project.*
> (Rourke, 1998b: 11)

MATERIAL RESOURCES

- ☐ *Early Intervention*
- ☐ *Adequate Funding*
- ☐ *Adequate Time*

Early Interventions

One factor emphasised by most research, evaluations and policy statements is the positive influence of early interventions on future retention levels and on transfer between primary and post-primary education. As ADM (1999a: 37) put it:

> *in relation to the age or stage at which preventative education measures can be most effective, there was a general consensus that interventions need to take place as early as possible within the primary school system when they are most likely to influence long-term positive outcomes.*

Hayes made this point in 1995 as part of her case for a national policy on early education. According to her, longitudinal research over a twenty-year period "clearly indicates that good quality early education is successful in improving not only educational achievement and behavioural adjustment but also in encouraging a greater sense of responsibility and self-control in later life" (Hayes, 1995: 8).

According to the White Paper on Early Childhood Education (DES, 2000), early interventions are essential in reducing both educational disadvantage and the need for further interventions later:

> *Most children enter the primary school system well-equipped to learn and to cope with the transition to formal education. However, for various reasons, some children have problems coping with this transition. Such children do not have a solid foundation upon which to accumulate knowledge and build their education. Without this initial foundation, the gap between these children and their peers tends to widen over time, and this creates the need for subsequent intervention to narrow the gap.*
> (DES, 2000: 6)

This was a point also made by the National Economic and Social Council, when they stated that "any attempts to sustain equality of opportunity at second or third level education are too late and greater long-term impacts could be made at the primary level."

The JETS evaluation (Rourke, 1998a: 8-9) provided evidence for a belief in the notion of "the earlier the better," concluding that:

> *the decision to begin the JETS project within the primary school system (rather than starting it within the post-primary system) was a sensible and wise decision ... There is strong evidence to suggest that many early school-leavers never really make an effective transition from primary to post-primary education and that although they might turn up they never really settle in to their new environment. The JETS project was of significant assistance in easing this crucial transition ...*

Devine's overview of the Educational Support Project argued that "most, if not all, of the available research would indicate that the earlier the intervention occurs the higher the likelihood of future success" (1999b: 36).

Adequate Funding

Preventative education measures are no different from any other measure, programme or organisation in their heavy reliance on their funding mechanism(s). This is particularly true of the more locally-based responses to early school-leaving, which are dependent on Partnerships and the Department of Education and Science for their yearly budget. The issue of finances is particularly troublesome, as a lack of money can have serious implications for the future of the project. Where finances are available, staff training can be paid for while without it there are no staff. It provides the base upon which the other areas of the measures are built and developed. Adequate funding also ensures at least the possibility of continuity and development over a longer period of time. In this way adequate funding is also linked to the issue of adequate time.

Adequate Time

Time is an important factor in the work of these initiatives and it operates on two levels. The first relates to the length of the interventions themselves. Questions have been raised regarding the benefits of interventions that lasted only one year. Secondly, time impacts on the workings of initiatives in terms of time available to people to work on the project. Many pointed to a high turnover of staff - which may relate to the heavy workload on such projects - and the added complexities of working on a multi-agency basis.

There is also a likelihood that projects may not last longer than a year. It is important to realise that too many of the early school interventions are pilot programmes added on to existing mainstream provision.

INTERNAL ORGANISATION

☐ *Adaptable and Flexible Organisations*
☐ *Good Working Relationships*
☐ *Clear Lines of Communication*
☐ *Co-ordination and Integration of Services and Support*

Adaptable and Flexible Organisations

This is particularly important when it comes to inter-agency work, and is a litmus test for the development of integrated services. According to Rourke (1999: 13):

> *participating organisations and agencies should be prepared to adapt traditional procedures and work practices, in order to provide a meaningful response to the needs of potential early school-leavers... The organisations which participate in integrated responses should also aim to adopt an open-ended and person-centred approach to the needs of young people, an approach which is not overly constrained by time limited projects or programmes.*

One of the benefits of such adaptability is a reduction in bureaucratic time delays, which greatly eases the burden on multi-agency approaches to intervention.

Good Working Relationships

Good working relationships, according to the research, are a crucial aspect in the development of preventative education measures and further enhance multi-agency approaches. The Youth Support and Training Unit (Unique Perspectives, 1999: 72), based in Clondalkin, placed this factor high on its list of achievements:

> *The establishment of good working relationships with local schools and training providers, local community support groups and statutory agencies has been a key developmental achievement of the Unit. It has been a catalyst for interagency co-operation in dealing with early school-leavers. While some relationships have*

> *taken longer to build than others there is now a very sound platform from which the whole issue of early school-leaving can be addressed.*

The literature on partnership and local development points to *parity of esteem* as crucial to the success of integrated approaches to local development (Walsh *et al*, 1998). In a sense, good working relationships are the product of such parity of esteem, where each organisation or representative feels they have an equal say in the development and management of the project. In this regard, the Primary Schools Initiative has "demonstrated what can be achieved when schools work together towards common goals, pool their resources and share their experiences and expertise" (Boldt, 1998a: 22).

Clear Lines of Communication

This was a structural aspect often commented on in the local approaches to early school-leaving. According to the case study of Blanchardstown Partnership's Preventative Education Programme (1998: 47), "central to the effectiveness of the programme is having clear management structures in place to develop and manage the specific actions." Good avenues of communication are also essential in co-ordinating and integrating multi-agency responses to early school-leaving.

Co-ordination and Integration of Services and Support

On the basis of the experiences and perceptions at least of those involved in provision, the benefits of networking, co-operation and integration are many. This issue of integration is the major focus of recent debate in theoretical and policy circles. As the previous Minister for Education, Micheál Martin (1999: 5), put it:

> *one-dimensional approaches (involving only one organisation or agency) are likely to be limited in their impact. Multi-dimensional approaches, with a range of different organisations and players working together in the best interests of young people, are much more likely to be effective and sustainable into the future.*

It seems that this emphasis on integrated services is based on sound practice. The majority of studies, evaluations and case studies carried out on Dublin's preventative education measures indicate that an integrated approach is either an essential aspect of current provision or a desired development for the future. This applies to both national and local approaches. The JETS evaluation (Rourke, 1998a) emphasised the importance of such integrated services when it comes to helping young people reach their full potential:

> *It is evident that an integrated, co-ordinated and 'whole community' approach is required if the JETS project is to succeed in retaining the participating young people in the school system. The needs of the young people are multifaceted, therefore the solutions or remedies should also be multifaceted. It is recognised that a multiplicity of approaches is required and that it will require effective co-ordination and information flow between a number of agencies and organisations if young people at risk (of dropping out, getting involved in drugs and crime, etc.) are to progress safely and satisfactorily through their teenage, adolescent years.*
> (Rourke, 1998a: 9-10)

O'Brien (1999: 15) made a similar point in his conclusions on the Department of Education and Science initiatives:

> *It is clear that agencies will have to work together because individually they do not seem to be solving the problem. The integrated approach, such as is outlined in the Integrated Services Project where all agencies virtually pool resources and work together in the fight against poverty and deprivation, is obviously the way of the future.*

EXTERNAL ORGANISATION

- ☐ *The Use of Local Approaches*
- ☐ *Involvement of pupils and parents*
- ☐ *Disseminating Information*

The Use of Local Approaches

This refers to capacity building at a local level and is one of the main aspects emphasised in policy concerning educational disadvantage and social exclusion. The objective of Partnership-based programmes is to develop local ownership in many instances, something that the CHOICES programme views as a largely positive aspect of its involvement. That said,

> *work needs to be undertaken to develop confidence and capacity in local people so that the programme can be genuinely community based and community led. CHOICES is now Partnership led with some sense of ownership in schools. The steering group needs to be established with genuine local community representation that is supported through training in leadership skills, communication and group decision-making. If community representatives do not feel that they are equal partners in the steering group it is unlikely that there can be movement towards a community-based scheme.*
> (CHOICES evaluation, 1999: 36-37)

Involvement of Young People and Their Parents

Again, the involvement of both young people and parents emerged as either a beneficial aspect of a programme, or was highlighted as an area in need of development. Rourke (1999: 20) summarises the view of many initiatives when he states that responses to educational disadvantage "are ultimately more sustainable and more valuable if they engage young people and parents as active participants at all stages in the lifespan of individual projects and initiatives, i.e. at the planning stage, at the implementation stage, and at the evaluation and review stage."

The Discipline For Learning Programme of the Southside Partnership (Boyle, 1999: 83) emphasises the involvement of students in particular:

> *Schools should teach their pupils the skills of conflict resolution, and schools should involve pupils, where appropriate, in the resolution of discipline issues. At the secondary level, again where possible, the student council should be involved in the design of the Discipline For Learning Programme and encouraged at all stages to actively contribute to its successful implementation in the school.*

In relation to the Department of Education and Science programmes, the ESF evaluation found that the role of parents was viewed as crucial to the success of any intervention:

> *Home support was seen to be crucial to work effectively with a child. More generally, the existence of a relationship between the school and parent was identified as creating the context for the operation of specific interventions to help a child. Working in a situation where the child is teacher dependent is less likely to be successful, both in the specific case of remedial education and across all interventions. In the absence of parental involvement, the view was held that the inputs of outsiders are less likely to succeed and the efforts of parents themselves will not be harnessed.*
> (ESF, 1997: 90)

Devine's (1999b: 32) review of the Stay in School Project operating in the KWCD partnership area outlines some methods by which parents can become more involved:

☐ Provision of more flexible and informal meeting structures through which their child's progress can be monitored.

☐ Provision of parenting awareness courses for individuals who may have had negative school experiences themselves and who may not fully understand the options available to their children.

☐ The presence of the parent(s) when the students profile report is being presented and explained.

However, it is wise to point out that a concept such as 'parental involvement' can cause some confusion. The Dublin Inner City Partnership case study of the Primary School Initiative (1999: 22) found this to be the case:

> *Terms such as parental involvement mean different things to the various schools involved in the PSI. Some may consider imparting information to parents as a way of involving them, or parents may be involved in the school through having their own Parent's Room. Yet others would understand parental involvement to mean inclusion and consultation in the planning and delivery of education services.*

Planning

Another factor pointed to as an essential element in any successful intervention measure was planning. As Sproule *et al* summarised (1999: 33), advocates of the locally-based integrated response "agree that the full development of such a response cannot proceed before the necessary planning for full-interagency co-operation takes place."

Dissemination of Information

Cullen (1997b: 19) argued that an important issue for the Educational Support Project to consider was to

> *ensure there is an effective dissemination of information to the varied publics and groups that in recent years have shown an interest in tackling educational disadvantage and who are keen to hear of new approaches and to gain insight into how new initiatives translate into meaningful practice. In particular this needs to happen within the local catchment area...*

Others argue strongly that the connection between local and state interventions and policy is crucial. Hayes (1999: 70) argues that the lack of such a connection when it comes to early childhood education is a deterrent to developing models of best practice:

> *For early education to have a positive and differential impact on young children and their families it must develop in the context of a clear national policy which is supportive of local policy. Promising developments at local or pilot level will not succeed if they are not taken on board and reinforced by national policy making. By the same token, high quality national policy initiatives which are not sensitively transferred to local level will ultimately fail.*

The Irish Vocational Education Association (1999: 2) also argues that an integrated approach can only become a reality "if it is tied to a statutory structure where its existence can be guaranteed and its progress monitored and evaluated." Crooks (1999: 12) widens this argument and argues that there is a need "to learn the lessons from local experience and to apply them both - horizontally - to other local situations and - vertically - to enable policy to develop at national level."

CONCLUSION

The large quantity of research, reviews and evaluations of early school-leaving interventions reveal a considerable degree of consensus on the ingredients of effective interventions. In the next and final section, this outline of a model for best practice is discussed in relation to the social context within which they operate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

Discussion

Recommendations

SUMMARY

Aim of the Study

The aim of the present study was to examine the structures, reviews and evaluations of preventative education measures in Dublin in order to develop recommendations for developing models of best practice. The study was commissioned by the Dublin Employment Pact, which was concerned to establish the extent, aims and outcomes of the wide range of measures being implemented to tackle early school-leaving. The study was based primarily on reports and evaluations published by the different organisations involved. The Report consists of three main sections, dealing respectively with an overview of policy, preventative education measures in Dublin and analysis and recommendations .

Overview of Policy

The first section of the Report provides an overview of the policy context of preventative education in Ireland. It was evident from the literature that early school-leaving is an issue receiving significant attention from Government. The majority of social policy measures introduced over the last few years have included elements designed to combat early school-leaving.

Another issue addressed was the high correlation between socio-economic background and early school-leaving. Given the stark nature of this relationship, it was considered strange that relatively little comment had been directed towards this issue, policy being geared instead towards schools, communities or individual pupils.

In terms of the debate on best practice in preventative education, government agencies and other organisations have tended to focus on two issues - organisation and resources. In particular the debate has placed heavy emphasis on developing an integrated services approach to preventative education. Like 'social exclusion,' 'integration' has become the latest buzzword in public policy. It is assumed that an integrated approach - meaning co-ordination and effective partnership across and between sectors and agencies - can lay the foundation for successful models of preventative education. The literature appeared to argue that an integrated approach, including a re-structuring of available resources, would benefit not only the organisations involved but also the students 'at risk' of early school-leaving.

Preventative Education Measures in Dublin

The second section of the Report provides a description of the different types of preventative education measures being implemented in Dublin. These were divided into three groups - Department of Education and Science programmes (such as the Home School Community Liaison and the Early Start Programme), other National Programmes and the various locally based preventative education programmes (such as JETS etc.). We found that they have certain shared characteristics, the most obvious being their preventative nature. Another shared characteristic, regardless of the scale and objectives of the programmes concerned, is that they all base their work on certain assumptions regarding the causes of early school-leaving. These tend to be either personal, cultural, social or economic in nature, and these assumptions determine both the organisation of programmes and the resources made available to them. A perceived understanding of early school-leaving and its causes is embedded in the process of each individual intervention.

Analysis and Recommendations

In the third section, the various analyses and recommendations from the reports and evaluations available were put together to identify the elements of a model of best practice for preventative education in Dublin. These fell under two headings - organisation and resources - and, as such, are in line with current debates concerning policy and practice. But the findings from the overview of programmes suggest other aspects of a model for best practice that tend to be blurred or ignored in the literature. There include, for instance, two types of organisational factor in shaping the effectiveness of programmes - internal and external. An internal issue such as good working relationships was viewed as crucial by many organisations, but so also was the external issue of involving parents and pupils in the decision-making process. It is likewise with resources: the reports and evaluations emphasise both human resources - particularly the issue of staffing, - and material resources, especially finance.

This overview enables us to develop a more abstract model for best practice in preventative education, which is detailed in Figure 4.1. The figure includes the four different factors and the elements comprising them. Thus, for instance, the human resources element includes dealing with staff factors like expertise and sensitivity, while the internal organisation element incorporates issues involving good working relationships and adaptable and flexible organisations. The circle is encased in an outer frame, with the four societal influences or sources of capital - personal, cultural, social and economic capital - placed within this square. The model is a tentative one, but it is an attempt to situate our model of best practice within a capital context.

DISCUSSION

The model forms the base for this discussion of early school-leaving measures. There are two main issues in particular that require closer examination - the issue of integration and the capital context of early school-leaving

Integration and early school-leaving

The aspect of programmes most discussed in both the policy literature and the reviews of on-the-ground measures is the integration of services. This is consistent with the proposal put forward by the community platform in 1999 for a new national Partnership Agreement, which advocated:

> *developing a locally based integrated strategy to address the problem of early school-leaving. Schools, parents, communities and youth services should be involved in the development of this strategy.* (O'Donoghue, 1999)

A great deal of the rationale for the development of integrated initiatives makes sense, and it would be unwise to ignore issues of duplication and fragmentation of programme delivery. Whether or not integrated approaches are more successful than non-integrated approaches in reducing early school-leaving remains to be seen, but they certainly appear to generate a great deal of goodwill. But the overview in the previous section of the elements of a model for best practice suggest that the current widely used definition of integration – in terms of services – is too narrow and restricted. The findings of other reports indicate that the understanding of integration needs to be broadened to the integration of the four factors identified in Figure 4.1 below. In essence, what the reviews are suggesting is that while clear lines of communication are vital in programmes, this will be enhanced if the parents and pupils are also involved in these communications. There is little point increasing teacher sensitivity to the needs of 'disadvantaged' children if enough time or money is not provided for them to function as part of the initiative. Good internal working relationships are more effective when relationships are developed with local initiatives and organisations.

A truly integrated initiative would thus involve the four factors in a way that valued each and recognised that without any one of them a programme would be much less likely to be effective. Each of the four factors is dependent on the other.

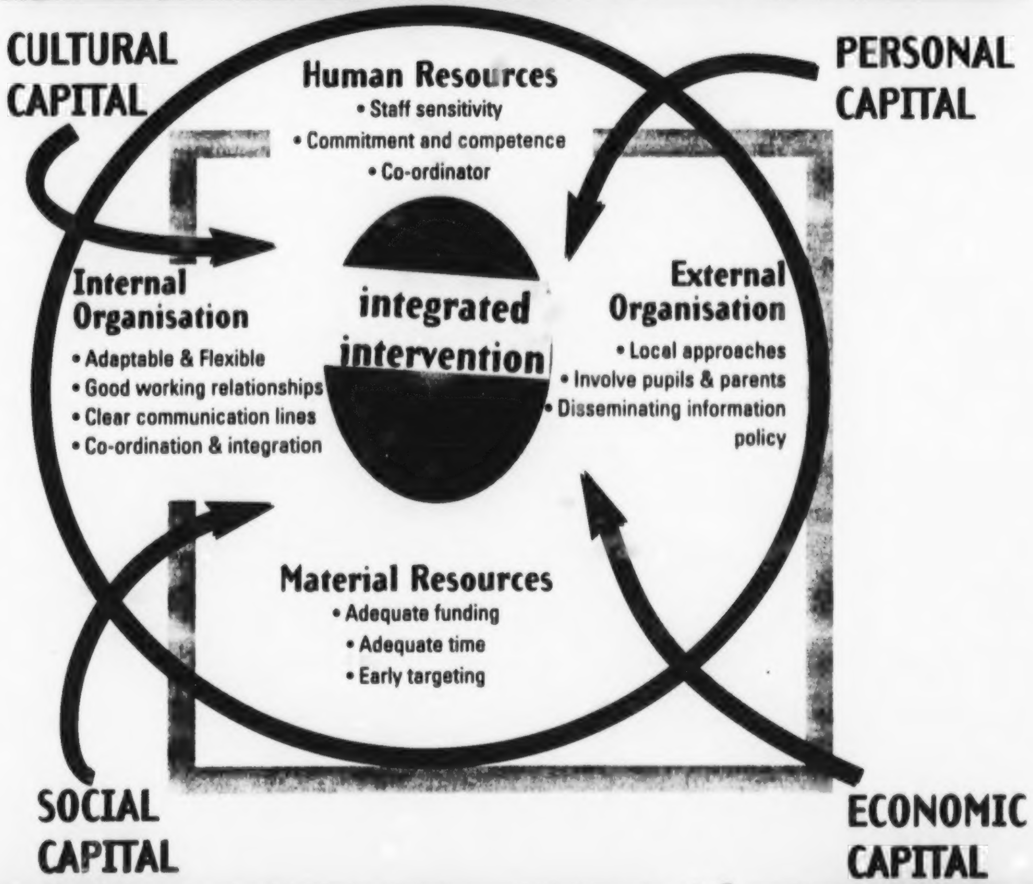
The capital context of early school-leaving

This broader definition of integration is consistent with the wider context of early school-leaving, combining the personal, cultural, social and economic factors in a way that reflects a properly functioning society. It also reflects the set of assumptions about early school-leaving upon which preventative measures are based. We saw earlier how measures can be categorised depending on the paradigm within which they operated - essentialist, consensual, and so on. Put simply, these assumptions range from seeing the individual, the parents, the local community, the schools or society as the cause of early school-leaving.

Sproule *et al* (1999) argued that all of these factors are equally valid. While the four elements of best practice each have their own role to play in the effectiveness of interventions, each type of capital - personal, cultural, social and economic - plays a role in deciding whether or not a child stays at school. Just as the four elements - human and material resources, internal and external organisation - need to be integrated to avoid fragmentation of service delivery, so too do these four factors need to be taken into account to avoid fragmentation of the wider context for the pupil.

Integration, therefore, is really a process of *de-fragmentation*, combining not only delivery mechanisms and service provision, but also re-assembling the broader context in which early school-leaving occurs.

Fig 4.1: Elements of a model for best practice in preventative education



This leads to the final point, the issue of socio-economic background or social class. There is a strong correlation between social class and early school-leaving, and any measure that regards itself as an integrated approach would be expected to incorporate this aspect. But this is not the case. It is unclear whether this is because of an over-attachment to more recent notions of social exclusion and marginalisation or whether the concept of social class is regarded as carrying too many ideological connotations. Of course, this correlation can also be regarded as emanating from personal, family or community factors.

But a closer at geographical patterns of early school-leaving in Dublin indicates another key issue involved.

In researching this study it rapidly became clear that the majority of early school-leaving interventions in Dublin were located in the post-1960s local authority housing estates that surround Dublin City. These roughly form a circle around the city and include the huge areas of Tallaght, Clondalkin, Blanchardstown, Finglas/Cabra, Ballymun, Kilbarrack and Coolock. Many of these estates were developed without adequate economic and community facilities. Furthermore, many of the families involved were removed from Inner City communities that previously provided them with a sense of community and a network of family and friends. It can be argued that the development of these large estates produced a form of social fragmentation in which a previously integrated way of life was effectively disintegrated.

The impetus behind integrated approaches to early school-leaving represent an attempt to *de-fragment* these communities, to provide them with adequate personal, cultural, social and economic capital and thus ensure a stable base for their children's education. There are few preventative education measures in more affluent, middle-class areas of Dublin. Instead, they are overwhelmingly concentrated in disadvantaged areas. This stark fact illustrates that middle-class areas already possess an integrated approach to preventative education, with personal, cultural, social and economic capital all being available to the pupil.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of existing provision suggests a model of good practice and the following recommendations were developed to assist the institutionalisation of this model.

1. Context

That early school-leaving be seen as the consequence of a range of interlinked factors that have personal, social, cultural and economic causes and consequences.

That solutions therefore also need to be multi-faceted address all elements of the personal, social, cultural and economic factors.

2. Principle of Integration

That integrated programmes and interventions be given priority so as to reduce the danger of fragmentation and duplication.

That measures operating in an integrated manner be adequately funded to support the process of integration.

That criteria for funding clearly outline what is involved in an integrated approach, i.e. involve the integration of all the four elements in the framework outlined in Fig. 4.1 above.

That both forms of integration – the integration of services provided by agencies and the integration of capital - be promoted.

3. Human Resources

That staff training and development – both initial and in-service – include dedicated elements on how to work with marginalised young people and their families in school and out of school.

That full-time co-ordinators be appointed to early school-leaving projects and programmes.

That the increased availability of expertise - e.g. guidance counsellors - be continued and expanded.

4. Material Resources

Though not arising from the written reports and evaluations reviewed for this study, it is clear that projects and programmes are sometimes in competition for resources and funding. We recommend that it is not appropriate that resources for the least well-off and marginalised in society be distributed on the basis of competitive practices.

All programmes reviewed and found to be effective should be mainstreamed and not have to survive on a pilot/temporary/short-term basis.

That research be initiated to evaluate the cost effectiveness of interventions.

That all reviews and evaluations of programmes and interventions address the issue of cost effectiveness in a satisfactory manner.

That staff in school and outside schools appointed to work in these programmes are appropriately sensitive and competent in this area.

That long-term funding be secured for integrated, co-ordinated programmes.

5. Internal Organisation

That all school programmes and the curriculum be early school-leaver proofed.

That organisational structures be adaptable and flexible so as to respond to the needs of children at risk of leaving school early.

That good working relations be regarded as crucial to the success of a programme.

That clear lines of communication be established between partners, between staff and at all levels of any programme.

That literacy be a key element in the process of facilitating retention in schools.

6. External Organisation

Though the school is frequently seen as the key player in early school-leaving interventions and the priority location for major funded programmes, an increasing emphasis must be given to projects, programmes and interventions that are community based or involve local approaches which network with the school system.

That all interventions involve parents and children in the design, planning and implementation of interventions in accordance with good adult and community education practices.

That when examples of good practice and innovative policy have been identified and, their characteristics described, these findings be disseminated among all interested practitioners.

That a forum for the young people involved in programmes be integrated as much as possible into the planning and implementation of interventions.

7. Future Research

That future research and evaluations on the outcomes of interventions include consideration of whether the young people concerned continued with their education or schooling.

That future research be initiated to study the cost-effectiveness of programmes and that the issue of cost-effectiveness form part of the review/evaluation process of every project.

That longitudinal research be carried out on the range of progression routes pursued by participants involved in the various interventions and programmes.

That a comprehensive cultural study of young people from working class backgrounds be initiated so that a more thorough understanding of their world-view can inform future programmes, projects and interventions.

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Appendices

A. [illegible]

B. [illegible]

C. [illegible]

D. [illegible]

E. Department of [illegible]

F. [illegible] Meeting

Note: The full text of Appendices E is available on the website www.dra.ie/dublinpact

APPENDIX A: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS CONTACTED

Partnerships

- Finglas/Cabra Partnership
- KWCD Partnership
- Northside Partnership
- Southside Partnership
- Tallaght Partnership
- Ballyfermot Partnership
- Ballymun Partnership
- Clondalkin Partnership
- Dublin Inner City Partnership
- Canal Communities Partnership
- Pavee Point
- Blanchardstown Area Partnership

Government Departments and Agencies

- Department of Education and Science
- FAS
- Combat Poverty Agency
- National Economic and Social Forum
- CDVEC
- Curriculum Development Unit
- Integrated Services Process

European Union

- YOUTHSTART
- Task Force Human Resources
- European Social Fund

Other Organisations

- Irish Vocational Education Association
- Irish National Teachers Association
- Area Development Management
- NEXUS
- School Attendance Service
- Children's Research Centre
- Dublin Chamber of Commerce
- Dublin Employment Pact
- CORI
- ETC Consultants
- National Early School-leaving Network
- Marino Institute of Education
- Education Research Centre

Youth Organisations

- National Youth Council
- Foroige
- National Youth Federation
- City of Dublin Youth Services Board
- Catholic Youth Council

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PREVENTATIVE EDUCATION MEASURES INCLUDED IN REPORT

Department of Education and Science

Early Start Programme
Home School Community Liaison
Remedial teachers
Support Teachers
Breaking the Cycle
Educational psychologists
8-15 initiative
Stay in School Initiative
Junior Certificate School Programme
Leaving Certificate Applied

Other National Programmes

Urban Initiative
Integrated Services Project
Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage

Local Initiatives

APPLE
(Area Partnership Programme for Language Enrichment)
CARA
(Clondalkin Area Response to Absenteeism)
CHOICES (Finglas-Cabra Partnership)
CLOVER
(Children Learn on Very Early Reading)
YSTU
(Youth Support and Training Unit)
BEST
(Ballymun Educational Support Team)
ESP (Educational Support Project)
SIS Project (Stay in School)
JETS
(Jobstown Education and Training Strategy)
PSI (Primary School Initiative)
DFL (Discipline for Learning)
SFP (Stengthening Families Programme)
PESL
(Potential Early School-leavers Programme)
The Life Centre Early School-leavers Project
School's Business Partnership
Special Initiative in Schools (Finglas-Cabra)
Pathways Through Education
Get Ahead
Stengthening Families Programme
Excel (Northside Partnership)
Challenger (Northside Partneship)
Art Therapy Project (Patrician College)
BITE
CAPE
Larkin Community College
NICKOL
CASP
North Inner City Home Support Service

The findings from the International Adult Literacy Survey (Morgan *et al*, 1997 and OECD, 1995) are useful in placing Ireland in an international educational context. Internationally, only Mexico has a higher percentage of adults at the lowest level of literacy. In contrast to this, only Mexico and Turkey have a higher percentage of the total population at primary school. Ireland has a young population, a high percentage of which is still at school. Compared to other OECD countries Ireland has a high percentage of adults who left school before the end of the secondary cycle (Table C.1). However, we do well when we compare the percentage of population who attended non-university third level education.

Ireland has nearly the same number of young people at school as there are people in the 25-64 age group, 96 per cent, the highest percentage in all OECD countries. The number of young people in school in Switzerland is only 43 per cent of those aged 25-64 (Table C.1). This places a burden on the Irish wage earning population.

How much is spent on education in Ireland? If the change in spending is measured as a percentage of GDP and how that has changed between 1990 and 1995, Ireland does not fare well. Of greater importance may be the amount spent per pupil. The expenditure per student on public and private institutions in Ireland is $2,108 for early childhood (OECD mean is $3,224); $2,144 for primary schooling (OECD mean is $3,546); and $3,395 for secondary (OECD mean is $4,606). The significance of this is that only the Czech Republic, Korea, Hungary and Mexico spend less than Ireland among countries for which statistics are available in 1995 (Table C.3). Switzerland, in contrast, spends almost $7,600 per secondary student and the UK $4,246.

Teacher pupil ratios can also provide an idea of how the educational system is organised relative to other countries. Of all OECD countries Ireland has the highest ratio of students to teachers in primary schools (22.6), with the exception of Mexico (28) and Korea (31). Sweden and Austria with 12.7 students per teacher and Denmark with 11.2 are among the best proportioned. The statistics are equally poor in secondary school. Ironically Ireland has a teacher student ratio in third level education that is better than the OECD mean (Table C.4).

How long can students in Ireland expect to remain in school? On average 11.8 years, if we include only primary and secondary school. This statistic is nearer to a measure of early school-leaving. Only Greece (11.6 years), Poland (11.7) and Mexico (10.3) have a lower mean score (Table C.6). The comparative figures for Australia (15.6 years), Belgium (14.5), Iceland (14.8) and Sweden, New Zealand and Netherlands (14.2) indicate the gap to be bridged (Table C.5).

In addition to this the unemployment rates among young people are equally revealing. When this is linked to level of education there is an unemployment rate of 32 per cent for young people ages 15-19 who leave school below upper secondary level. Only Hungary, Italy and Spain have higher rates than this (Table C.6).

Table C1: Distribution of the population 25 to 64 years of age by level of educational attainment

	Population				
	Below upper secondary education	Upper secondary education	Non-university tertiary education	University- level education	Total
Australia	43	32	10	15	100
Austria	29	63	02	06	100
Belgium	47	30	13	11	100
Canada	24	29	31	17	100
Czech Rep.	16	74	x	10	100
Denmark	34	44	07	15	100
Finland	33	46	09	12	100
France	40	41	09	10	100
Germany	19	60	09	13	100
Greece	56	25	07	12	100
Hungary	37	50	x	13	100
Ireland	***50***	***28***	***12***	***11***	***100***
Italy	62	30	x	08	100
Korea	39	42	x	19	100
Luxembourg	71	18	x	11	100
Netherlands	37	40	x	23	100
New Zealand	40	35	14	11	100
Norway	18	55	11	16	100
Poland	26	61	03	10	100
Portugal	80	9	03	07	100
Spain	70	13	05	13	100
Sweden	26	47	14	13	100
Switzerland	20	58	12	10	100
Turkey	83	11	x	06	100
UK	24	55	09	13	100
US	14	52	08	26	100
Country Mean	**40**	**40**	**10**	**13**	**100**

Source: Education at a Glance – Education Indicators 1998

Poland: Year of reference 1995.
Turkey: Year of reference 1997.

Table C2 Number of people at the age of basic, upper secondary and tertiary education as a percentage of the total population (1996) and projected size of population in 2006

				Change in the size of the population (1996=100)						Number of students enrolled as a percentage of employed population 25-64 age band
	% of population			Age 5-14		Age 15-19		Age 20-29		
	Age 5-14	Age 15-19	Age 20-29	1990	2006	1990	2006	1990	2006	
Australia	14	07	15	96	107	113	109	99	95	81
Austria	12	06	15	92	96	102	107	109	89	52
Belgium	12	06	14	100	97	104	100	110	90	75
Canada	13	07	14	95	98	99	108	114	101	63
Czech Republic	13	08	15	119	86	99	76	88	97	53
Denmark	11	06	15	100	117	118	100	103	77	57
Finland	13	06	13	102	98	91	95	112	102	61
France	13	07	15	101	91	110	99	101	91	71
Germany	11	05	14	91	88	98	106	115	87	54
Greece	12	07	15	117	87	101	74	95	90	58
Hungary	12	08	15	121	85	99	75	87	93	70
Iceland	16	08	15	98	107	100	105	102	100	-
Ireland	***17***	***09***	***15***	***114***	***79***	***98***	***79***	***88***	***104***	***96***
Italy	10	06	16	117	91	124	79	104	73	61
Japan	11	07	15	118	92	120	77	89	83	-
Korea	15	09	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	63
Luxembourg	12	05	14	91	115	88	104	100	97	47
Mexico	24	11	19	99	103	99	102	82	107	-
Netherlands	12	06	15	95	101	119	108	110	80	61
New Zealand	15	07	15	94	110	111	113	96	94	82
Norway	13	06	15	95	107	120	110	102	81	57
Poland	16	08	14	107	76	87	86	95	121	76
Portugal	12	08	16	124	95	113	71	96	85	64
Spain	11	08	17	126	86	109	68	99	82	90
Sweden	12	06	14	91	103	113	117	101	86	59
Switzerland	12	06	14	90	101	106	114	114	88	43
Turkey	20	11	19	110	103	90	84	86	116	-
United Kingdom	13	06	15	96	94	107	108	111	90	65
United States	15	07	14	92	100	97	115	111	105	66
Country Mean	**13**	**07**	**15**	**104**	**97**	**105**	**95**	**100**	**93**	**65**

Source: OECD Education Database. Education at a glance – OECD education indicators 1998.

Table C3: Expenditure per student (US dollars converted using PPPs) on public and private institutions by level of education (based on full-time equivalents) (1995)

				Tertiary			All levels of education combined
	Early childhood	Primary	Secondary	All	Non-university	University-level	
Australia	-	3121	4899	10590	7699	11572	-
Austria *	4907	5572	7118	7943	12834	7687	6763
Belgium **	2391	3270	5770	6043	-	-	4694
Canada	5378	-	-	11471	10434	12217	6717
Czech Rep.	2052	1999	2820	6795	2502	7656	2885
Denmark	4964	5713	6247	8157	-	-	5968
Finland	5901	4253	4946	7315	6933	7412	5323
France	3242	3379	6182	6569	-	-	5001
Germany *	5277	3361	6254	8897	6817	9001	5972
Greece **	-	-	1950	2716	1750	3169	1991
Hungary *	1365	1532	1591	4792	-	4792	1782
Iceland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	***2108***	***2144***	***3395***	***7249***	-	-	***3272***
Italy *	3316	4673	5348	5013	6705	4932	5157
Japan	2476	4065	4465	8768	6409	9337	4991
Korea	1450	2135	2332	5203	3980	5733	2829
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	1088	1015	1798	5071	-	5071	1464
Netherlands	3021	3191	4351	9026	-	9026	4397
New Zealand	2262	2638	4120	8737	10018	8380	4099
Norway *	-	-	-	9647	-	-	6360
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal *	-	-	-	6073	-	-	-
Spain	2516	2628	3455	4944	3973	4966	3374
Sweden	3287	5189	5643	13168	-	-	5993
Switzerland *	2436	5893	7601	15685	8226	18365	7241
Turkey *	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UK **	5049	3328	4246	7225	-		4222
US	-	5371	6812	16262	7973	19965	7905
Country Mean	**3224**	**3546**	**4606**	**8134**	**6016**	**8781**	**4717**

Source: OECD education database. Education at a glance – OECD education indicators 1998.

*Public institutions

**Public and government-dependent private institutions

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Table C4: Ratio of students to teaching staff by level of education (calculations based on full-time equivalents) (1996)

	Early childhood education	Primary education	Lower secondary education	Upper secondary education	All secondary education	Non-university tertiary	University -level	All tertiary education
Australia	-	18.1	-	-	-	-	15.4	-
Austria	18.9	12.7	9.2	8.5	8.9	-	14.5	-
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canada	21.5	17.0	20.0	19.5	19.7	12.8	16.4	14.6
Czech Rep.	11.9	20.4	13.0	11.7	12.3	9.0	11.7	11.2
Denmark	13.1	11.2	10.1	12.1	11.0	-	-	-
Finland	11.9	16.8	12.4	-	-	-	-	-
France	24.6	19.5	-	-	13.3	-	17.2	17.1
Germany	23.7	20.9	16.0	13.1	15.0	12.3	12.5	12.5
Greece	14.9	15.0	11.4	11.3	11.3	23.0	23.9	23.6
Hungary	11.7	12.2	9.5	11.3	10.4	-	9.9	9.9
Iceland	4.5	17.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	***24.1***	***22.6***	-	-	***15.8***	***12.2***	***21.6***	***16.7***
Italy	13.9	11.2	10.8	9.8	10.2	7.6	29.0	25.7
Japan	17.8	19.7	16.2	15.6	15.9	10.8	13.5	12.4
Korea	24.9	31.2	25.5	23.1	24.3	-	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	23.6	28.3	17.7	13.8	16.2	-	9.4	9.4
Netherlands	20.0	20.0	-	-	18.6	-	18.7	18.7
New Zealand	6.0	22.0	18.1	14.1	16.1	11.6	16.1	14.9
Norway	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Portugal	-	-	-	-	-	-	18.5	-
Spain	19.4	18.0	17.8	14.2	15.1	12.3	17.6	17.4
Sweden	20.2	12.7	12.2	15.2	13.7	-	-	-
Switzerland	18.3	15.9	13.0	10.2	12.3	-	21.2	-
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UK	19.1	21.3	16.0	15.3	15.6	-	-	16.7
US	21.9	16.9	17.5	14.7	16.1	19.4	14.1	15.4
Country Mean	**17.6**	**18.3**	**14.8**	**13.7**	**14.6**	**13.1**	**16.7**	**15.7**

Source: OECD Education Database. *Education at a Glance – OECD Education Indicators 1998.*

Table C5: School expectancy (1990,1996) and index of change in enrolment (1990 = 100, 1996, 2005 [projected], 2015 [projected])

	School expectancy under current conditions (full-time and part-time)*				**Change in enrolment at all levels of education**		**Change in enrolment in primary and secondary education**			
	All levels of education		**Primary and secondary education**		**Total enrolment (1990=100)**					
	1990	***1996***	***1990***	***1996***	***1990***	***1996***	***1990***	***1996***	***2005***	***2015***
Australia	16.2	19.3	13.7	15.6	100	114	100	111	-	-
Austria	14.3	15.8	11.8	12.4	100	108	100	104	106	91
Belgium	-	18.3	-	14.5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Canada	16.5	17.1	12.5	12.3	100	110	100	108	110	105
Czech Rep.	13.9	14.6	12.0	12.1	100	92	100	90	-	-
Denmark	16.1	17.1	12.6	13.0	100	114	100	94	101	101
Finland	15.5	17.2	12.4	13.0	100	110	100	105	103	97
France	-	16.5	-	13.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	-	16.3	-	13.4	100	106	100	105	-	-
Greece	-	14.2	-	11.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hungary	13.8	14.8	11.6	12.0	100	96	100	90	-	-
Iceland	-	17.5	-	14.8	100	113	100	107	-	-
Ireland	***14.5***	***15.6***	***11.6***	***11.8***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***97***	***76***	***73***
Italy	-	-	-	-	100	95	100	89	80	70
Japan	12.6	-	12.1	12.2	100	93	100	85	-	-
Korea	-	14.8	-	11.9	100	95	100	88	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	11.8	12.0	10.2	10.3	100	107	100	104	-	-
Netherlands	16.7	17.5	14.0	14.2	100	100	100	96	99	89
New Zealand	14.8	17.2	13.0	14.2	100	119	100	114	126	131
Norway	16.0	17.1	12.5	12.7	100	109	100	97	104	103
Poland	-	14.8	-	11.7	100	106	100	102	-	-
Portugal	13.7	16.9	12.1	13.9	100	109	100	96	-	-
Spain	15.4	17.5	12.6	14.0	100	-	100	89	70	64
Sweden	-	18.0	-	14.2	100	109	100	103	112	106
Switzerland	15.3	15.7	12.3	12.7	100	107	100	105	113	102
Turkey	-	-	-	-	100	111	100	107	-	-
UK	15.4	17.3	14.2	14.9	100	114	100	108	106	99
US	16.3	16.8	11.8	12.0	100	111	100	110	116	113

Source: OECD education database. Education at a glance – OECD education indicators 1998.

Education for children under the age of five is excluded. Turkey: 1996 data refer to 1995. Data for Russian Federation and Thailand are for 1997.

Table C6: Unemployment rates of youth by level of education attainment and age group (1996)

	Below upper secondary education			Upper secondary education			Non-university tertiary education		University-level education		All levels of education		
	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Age 25-29	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Age 25-29	Age 20-24	Age 25-29	Age 20-24	Age 25-29	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Age 25-29
Australia	22.6	19.8	12.0	16.5	10.1	7.1	8.2	5.9	6.7	4.2	20.4	11.9	8.0
Austria	7.4	10.4	8.6	5.7	4.6	3.2	14.2	4.4	3.9	6.5	6.8	5.7	4.2
Belgium	22.9	29.7	18.9	27.3	[illegible]	11.0	9.7	4.7	14.6	5.8	25.3	20.0	10.7
Canada	22.7	25.0	21.2	15.9	12.7	11.7	11.5	8.8	9.0	5.7	20.1	13.6	10.4
Czech Rep.	22.3	12.6	17.9	11.6	3.4	3.6	-	-	7.1	1.1	14.1	4.0	4.1
Denmark	2.4	14.7	18.9	5.2	7.0	7.4	11.1	6.0	6.8	6.3	2.6	9.9	10.5
Finland	24.9	39.5	28.5	36.0	23.8	17.0	20.5	12.2	17.2	7.6	29.0	26.7	17.0
France	24.3	37.0	25.5	26.5	23.5	15.0	19.0	10.1	18.2	14.4	24.7	26.6	16.4
Germany	6.8	15.4	17.4	8.4	8.4	7.5	7.2	4.9	-	6.5	7.3	9.6	8.4
Greece	32.0	19.9	13.9	54.2	31.3	15.6	39.4	19.4	41.2	22.4	41.8	29.5	16.9
Hungary	42.3	22.3	20.8	24.6	11.7	10.0	-	-	3.4	4.1	29.4	13.1	10.9
Ireland	***32.3***	***30.6***	***24.7***	***19.4***	***13.1***	***7.9***	***8.4***	***5.2***	***6.5***	***4.9***	***25.4***	***15.9***	***11.5***
Italy	33.1	29.1	16.8	45.9	36.8	17.7	-	-	37.9	31.0	36.1	33.1	18.3
Korea	9.8	7.6	3.0	6.7	5.3	3.0	-	-	7.7	4.0	7.5	5.9	3.3
Luxembourg	15.0	9.6	5.9	18.8	4.8	2.8	-	-	14.9	0.6	15.2	9.1	4.6
Netherlands	18.9	11.8	8.6	8.8	6.6	4.5	-	-	11.6	6.6	16.9	8.8	6.0
New Zealand	17.3	14.7	10.8	11.2	7.6	3.5	10.8	6.1	6.3	2.3	15.1	9.6	5.9
Norway	18.9	16.1	10.5	14.3	9.7	6.2	7.4	5.8	9.2	5.2	17.9	10.2	6.4
Poland	30.6	32.0	26.1	50.8	26.7	14.4	26.0	8.8	17.2	7.4	44.2	27.1	14.5
Portugal	16.6	13.8	9.2	38.7	20.4	8.9	17.7	8.8	25.6	9.0	18.4	15.9	9.1
Spain	50.3	37.0	31.7	51.7	40.7	24.8	36.8	24.9	52.1	31.2	50.8	39.2	29.3
Sweden	22.2	30.9	22.8	23.8	20.2	13.6	11.0	8.0	10.9	5.1	22.2	20.6	12.7
Switzerland	(13.7)	-	(14.7)	-	4.6	5.3	5.2	1.7	-	(18.1)	12.3	5.3	7.1
Turkey	8.8	9.6	6.7	33.9	27.2	11.8	-	-	29.1	10.5	13.3	15.6	8.1
UK	31.4	28.0	21.7	14.9	11.6	9.5	8.0	2.9	11.3	4.9	17.9	12.8	9.3
US	21.3	19.1	16.2	11.2	9.6	7.1	5.3	2.2	5.4	2.8	17.8	9.9	6.4
Country Mean	22.0	21.5	16.7	23.3	15.4	9.6	14.6	7.9	15.6	8.8	21.3	15.8	10.4

Source: OECD education database. Education at a glance – OECD education indicators 1998.

United Kingdom: Data for 15-19 refer to 16-19 year-olds   Figures in brackets are estimates

APPENDIX D: CENSUS DATA FOR DUBLIN PARTNERSHIP AREAS

THE Census of Population (1996) and the Trutz Haase Deprivation Score provide some important data on the historical and social context of early school-leaving in Ireland. Clondalkin is one example that can help identify aspects of the background to early school-leaving. For purposes of comparison, two District Electoral Divisions (DED) in Clondalkin are used. Clondalkin-Rowlagh DED is in the lowest decile of deprived areas and Lucan-Esker DED is in the top decile of affluence.

In the area included in the Clondalkin Area Partnership Company (APC) 30 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age and 20 per cent under 10 (national figures are 25 per cent and 15 per cent respectively). Ten per cent of households consist of lone parents with at least one child under 15. This is significantly higher than the region (6 per cent) and the state (5 per cent). In Clondalkin-Rowlagh DED the figure is 19 per cent.

In the APC area, 37 per cent of the adult population left education at or before 15 years of age. In Clondalkin-Rowlagh this figure was 57 per cent. The figure for the Dublin region was 32 per cent, and the national average is 19 per cent.

Nine per cent of the Clondalkin APC population remained in education beyond the age of 20 compared with a 15 per cent National average. In Lucan-Esker 22 per cent of the population aged over 15 and out of education had remained in the system up to and beyond the age of 20. The percentage thus classified in Clondalkin-Rowlagh DED is 2 per cent.

In 1996, 26 per cent of the people aged 15 years and over had no formal education or had primary education only at the APC level. This figure was in line with the region (25 per cent) and less than the country as a whole (30 per cent). In Clondalkin-Rowlagh 43 per cent of the population (15 years and over whose education had ceased) had no formal education or had only primary education. In the region, in 1996, 25 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over whose full-time education had ceased, had received a third level education, while in the country as a whole the average was 20 per cent. The comparable figure in the APC is 15 per cent. Thirty three per cent of the population (whose education has ceased) in Lucan-Esker had received a third level education but in the poorest area this figure fell to less than 4 per cent.

In 1996, the percentage of men who had left school with no formal education or with primary education only was 24 per cent in the APC. The Partnership figure was again in line with the region (23 per cent) and less than the National average (31 per cent). Sixteen per cent of men in the APC had completed third level education. The figure for the region was 27 per cent and 20 per cent in the population as a whole.

Twenty eight per cent of women in the APC left the education system with primary level or no formal education. The figures of the region and the state were 26 per cent and 29 per cent respectively. In the APC, 14 per cent of women had attended third level education, less than in the region (24 per cent) and the state (20 per cent). Historically, women have left school earlier than men but the gap between men and women is least in the more affluent areas and greatest in areas of greatest disadvantage.

Thirty six per cent of the total unemployed population in the Clondalkin APC (includes first time job seekers) had no formal education or had primary education only. The comparable figure for the region and state were 33 per cent in each case.

What is significant about this data, replicated across the region, is that not only is the Dublin Region an area of disadvantage but that the disadvantage is particularly acute in identifiable DED areas. Using the Haase Index of Relative Affluence and Deprivation, the Area Development Management, *Clondalkin Partnership Baseline Data Report – 1998* identifies the DED areas with relative affluence and deprivation.[5] A score of 10 indicates that a DED is part of the most disadvantaged decile of DEDs. In Clondalkin, Clondalkin-Rowlagh was 10 in 1991 and 10 in 1996. But Lucan-Esker in the same period moved from 3 to 1.

While the National Mean factor Score has improved from 5.1 (1991) to 4.6 (1996) and the Clondalkin APC Mean Factor Score has improved from 7.0 (1991) to 5.5 (1996) the areas of greatest deprivation have shown least movement. Clondalkin-Rowlagh is at 10 in both 1991 and 1996. For the poorest DEDs this is the case across the Region. There are 223 DEDs in the Dublin Region Partnership areas. Of these 76 were in the poorest decile in 1991. By 1996, 54 continued in the poorest decile. As in any race, if one does not keep up with the pace, the gap widens. This is the case with the poorest DEDs in Dublin. This has implications for how funding is targeted.

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[5] The Haase Index was first established to facilitate the designation of Partnership areas for inclusion in the *Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999)*.

Table D1: Summary of Census Data for Clondalkin Area Partnership Company

	APC %	Clondalkin Rowlagh %	Lucan-Esker %	Dublin Region %	National %
Percentage of population under 15 years of age	30	33	24	22	25
Lone parent households with at least one child under 15 years as percentage of all households	10	19	4	06	05
Percentage who left school at or before 15 years	37	57	19	49	35
Percentage who remained in education beyond 20 yrs of age	09	02	22	19	15
Percentage with no formal education or with primary education only	26	43	14	25	30
Percentage of the population aged 15 and over whose full-time education has ceased and who went to third level	15	3.5	33	25	20
Percentage of men who had completed third level	16	04	33	27	20
Percentage of women who completed third level	14	03	32	24	20
Percentage of men who left school with no formal or with primary education only	24	37	13	23	31
Percentage of women who left school with no formal or with primary education only	28	48	14	26	29
Deprivation Index:					
Score 1991	07	10	03	-	5.1
Score 1996	5.5	10	01	4.7	4.6

Source: ADM, (1998). Baseline data report – Clondalkin Partnership (Dublin: Gamma).

Table D2: Percentage who left school at or before 15 years of age and percentage with no formal education or with primary only by Partnership area.

	Left school at or before 15			Left school with no formal education or with primary only		
	Average for APC %	Most deprived DED in APC %	Most affluent DED in APC %	Average for APC %	Most deprived DED in APC %	Most affluent DED in APC %
National	19	-	-	30	-	-
Dublin Region	32	-	-	25	-	-
Ballyfermot	68	71	65	58	61	56
Ballymun	57	59	54	45	50	40
Blanchardstown	34	62	19	24	34	16
Canal	51	61	37	43	52	33
Clondalklin	37	57	19	26	43	14
Finglas Cabra	50	66	21	41	56	17
Inner City	44	67	10	37	56	6
KWCD	47	68	15	40	55	12
Northside	39	61	16	29	50	12
Southside	18	48	5	15	41	3
Tallaght	42	60	20	30	47	13

Source: ADM (1998) Baseline Data Reports (Dublin: Gamma).

Table D3: Percentage who remained in education beyond 20 years of age and percentage of the population aged 15 and over whose full time education has ceased and who went to third level by Partnership area

	Percentage who remained in education beyond 20 years of age			Percentage of the population aged 15 and over whose full-time education has ceased and who went to third level		
	Average for APC %	Most deprived DED In APC %	Most affluent DED in APC %	Average for APC %	Most deprived DED in APC %	Most affluent DED in APC %
National	15			20		
Dublin Region	19			25		
Ballyfermot	2	1	4	4	2	5
Ballymun	3	2	3	4	3	5
Blanchardstown	10	2	21	16	3	28
Canal	9	4	17	13	6	24
Clondalkin	9	2	22	15	4	33
Finglas Cabra	8	2	26	11	3	35
Inner City	19	5	58	24	7	68
KWCD	10	3	33	14	4	41
Northside	10	1	25	15	2	31
Southside	30	9	55	39	14	57
Tallaght	7	2	17	11	3	26

Source: ADM (1998) Baseline Data Reports (Dublin: Gamma).

This Appendix, which classifies and gives full details of the following Department of Education and Science measures listed below, is available on the website of the Dublin Employment Pact (www.dra.ie/dublinpact).

The 1999 Package of Measures
Education Act (1998)
Disadvantaged Areas Scheme
New Targetting Scheme for disadvatnaged pupils
Education (Welfare) Bill
School Development Planning Initiatives
National Educational Pychological Service
Curriculur Reform - LCA, LVCP, JCSP, New Primary Curriculum
Home School Community Liaison Scheme
Remedial / Resource Teachers
Guidance / Counselling Service
Book Grant Scheme
Additional Teacher Posts
National Reading Initiatives
Third Level Access Initiative

Special Projects
Early Start
Breaking the Cycle
8-15 year olds Initiative
Stay in School Project
Support Teacher Initiative
Youth Encounter Projects

Traveller Education
Pre-School Funding for tuition transport
Special Primary Schools
Resource Teachers in National Schools
Increased capitation at second level
Junior + Senior Traveller Training Centres
Visiting Teacher Service

Other
Youthreach 15-18 year old Early School-leavers
Area Partnerships - Education Co-Ordinator in 38 partnerships-part or full funding by Department of Education and Science

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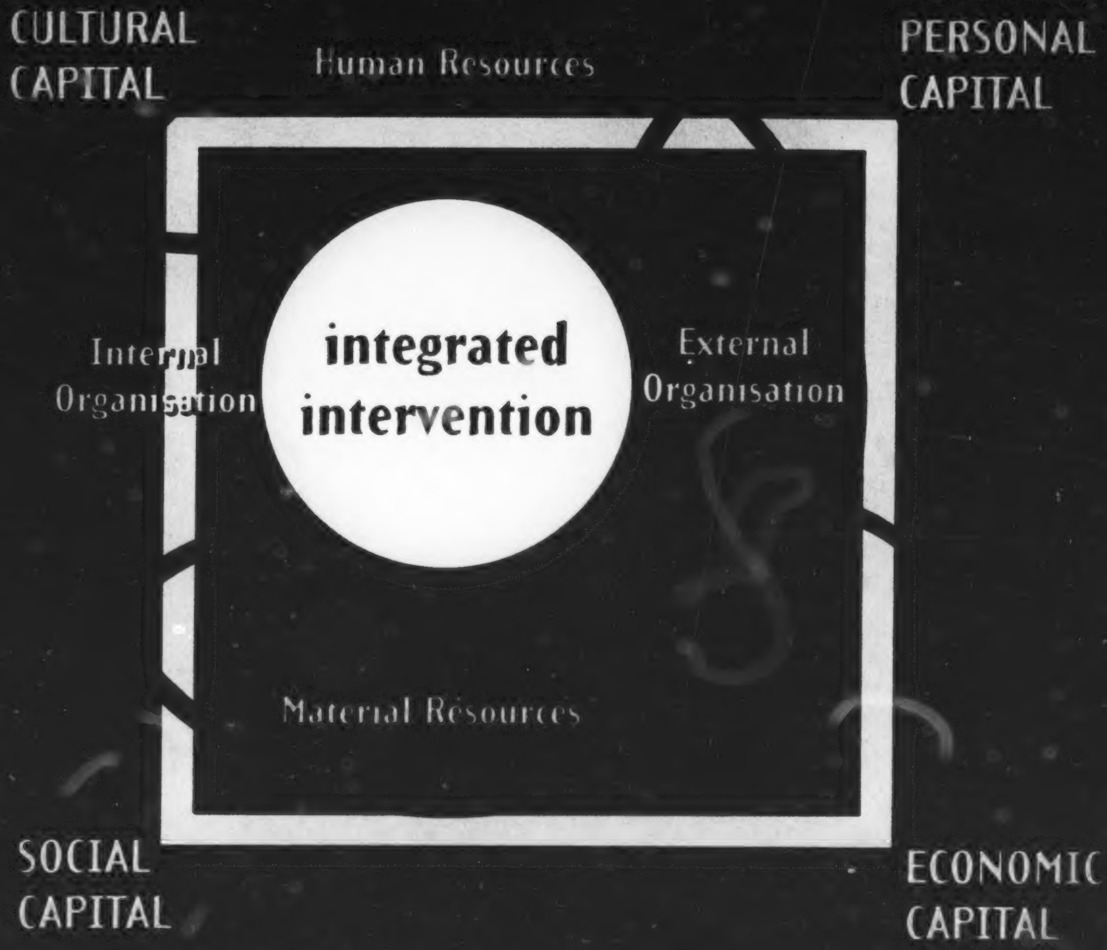

Dublin Employment Pact

The Dublin Employment Pact

Website: www.dra.ie/dublinpact

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